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Not For The Meek

By

ELIZABETH DEWING KAUP

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Second Printing

To
W. J. K.
and
R. H. S.

I have sedulously endeavored not to laugh at human actions,
not to lament them, nor to detest them. —SPINOZA

There are in this novel certain internationally known figures, about whom nothing important is said which is not already common knowledge. These are mentioned by name. All other characters are fictional, and any resemblance they may have to any persons, living or dead, is wholly coincidental.

ELIZABETH DEWING KAUF

PART I

NOT FOR THE MEEK

1

Once more, Martin shuffled the cards. He liked doing that. Every time he reshuffled he changed the chances of the game he would eventually get down to playing. Just shuffling—not yet playing—was gambling reduced to its elements, gambling without knowing whether you were winning or losing. And it brought to him, also, the pleasure gained from a sense of sin. He shouldn't be playing solitaire at all. He shouldn't be even thinking about it. He should be, instead, thinking of himself, and scribbling notes on the yellow pad so conveniently set out on the little table before him. How, else, would the very superior young man who had engaged to do the actual writing have anything to write about?

Martin was sitting by a large bay window. He could see, looking out, the leaves of the Park trees dry with dust from the late summer drought. He remembered so many summers—or had at least lived through them. Seventy-three, wasn't it? You would think, to hear people talk, that seventy-three was beyond the ordinary human span. Why, his uncle—he who had had the farm in Jutland—had died at ninety-seven. Cut off in his prime, you might say, because the harvest had been a little heavy. Martin had seen him not so long ago, and he remembered him then as a strong active man. But in Denmark there was no reason for death. Martin hoped there never would be. He himself should have stayed there on that last trip he had made, instead of just visiting. If he had, he wouldn't be ill now.

He knew what people thought. They thought this illness

was the end. It might be. And it might be merely a temporary slack in the full stream of his living. Some days he felt so well, like to-day. He'd fool them yet, perhaps. As soon as he could walk again—that is, walk without assistance—he'd walk right out of this great room here, of which he had grown so mortally tired, and down the broad stairs and through the hall and out into the street. He would cross Fifth Avenue all by himself, and hail a taxi and drive down town, and surprise everyone like merry hell by walking into the offices of MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED. There was no one, surely, who had a better right. He wasn't a man selling insurance or books or looking for a job. He was MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, in person.

He had no illusions about the success he had made. He'd been lucky—almost consistently lucky. Men who failed did so largely because they hadn't happened to have held the cards. He'd held the whole pack of them, just as solidly as he was holding the pack now in his hand. His failures had been incidental. The kind of failures any man was bound to have. Thinking back as he was now doing, he could say that his luck had lasted pretty well, all things considered—lasted to the end. But he hadn't come to the end yet. There were things he still wanted to do—he, Martin Lyndendaal, who'd done everything. There were things he still wanted to have—he, Martin Lyndendaal, who'd had everything. He wasn't ready to die, nor afraid of it, either. He didn't believe he'd be punished for his sins in some sort of blazing Hereafter. If his lack of belief were wrong, well, the devil would have quite a job burning him up! Living, not dying, that was the thing, and not being afraid.

In 1929 there had been a panic. This summer of 1939—ten years after—there was another kind of panic, not concerned specifically with money. Nothing was safe and nothing sacred. The past was over, dead as a dead fish. It seemed a strange time for a man like Martin, who was seventy-

three, and therefore concerned wholly with the past, to be giving even a half-consent to the writing of a history of his life. Who would want it? But he'd already made a few notes, looked up some letters and some photographs, and collected some biographical data which had appeared about him from time to time. This young man, his appointed historian—Benison, the name was—had paid a visit to the Jersey mills and also to the Pittsburgh plant, and returned comparatively empty-handed. These places, he said, reminded him of etchings. He had a book of such etchings, done by a famous artist. Meanwhile, Martin talked with the publisher whose idea this history of Martin originally was.

"A success story," the publisher said. "The emigrant boy coming to this country—this land of opportunity—penniless—alone—"

Only Martin wasn't penniless and he wasn't alone. He'd just been paid off, and he had seventy-two dollars and eighty cents. And he had his cousin, Axel Christiansen, to show him round.

"Axel had landed the year before," Martin explained. "As a matter of fact, I had come at that time, too, but not to stay—not to settle down."

"Why not?"

"I wanted to see a little more of the world, I guess."

"The adventurous spirit," the publisher defined it, and then—"What use did you make of the seventy-two dollars and eighty cents?"

"I'd hate to tell you—all except ten of it."

"I don't quite understand—"

"It's simple enough. We spent sixty-two dollars and eighty cents in a certain manner, and ten dollars I put away against a rainy day."

The man smiled weakly. "Which for you never came?"

"Not the kind of rain that ten dollars clears up. And as for the sixty-two—that would hardly go in the book."

"I'm sure Mr. Benison will know what goes in and what doesn't."

Martin had let that pass and his visitor went on: "All your worldly goods tied together in a sort of pack, perhaps? Very picturesque."

"You make me sound like a bindle stiff."

"A what?"

"You wouldn't ask if you'd seen as many of 'em as I have. In the old days labor wasn't so easy to come by—you couldn't be too particular."

"Oh, we've come a long way since then, Mr. Lyndendaal, a long way indeed! And your book will trace that path. Aside from being a defense of the capitalistic system, it will have in the main an inspirational quality—"

"You're miles ahead of me," Martin had cut in.

"I mean, it will fill with hope and ambition the young men starting out in life. What you could do, they can do—or so they will regard it. You were a sailor, weren't you, Mr. Lyndendaal?"

"Not exactly. I was a stoker at first, and a damned good one. Before I quit I'd worked my way up. You can learn a good deal in an engine room if you keep your eyes open."

"I thought you were just a boy."

"I was twenty-two. That's a man where I came from. And I was strong and well grown. In fact, I'd been around quite a bit."

"I think we can leave all that to Mr. Benison. Without, of course, sacrificing verisimilitude he will—"

The servant, Eric, had entered then, cutting short what Mr. Benison would do. Martin could always ring for Eric when he was bored or tired. There was a bell button inserted in the cloth surface of his card table. He could press it without attracting any attention.

Well, no contract was signed as yet. The book was still nebulous—still in the minds of the publisher and Benison, and

mostly in the mind of Martin himself. That made three books, or at least two. Two entirely different books, Martin was increasingly aware. Was it that there weren't enough books in the world already, without adding one more—unless you could have in it what you pleased? Unless you could truthfully set down your life as you had lived it, and what this life had done to you, and what conclusions you had reached? Unless you could evolve something genuine, something lasting, out of experiences which at the time of their occurrence were never seemingly as important or as unimportant as the perspective of years showed them? Martin was an old man now, but he wasn't too old to remember things with a terrible clarity. In the years ahead—if such there were—this clarity might pass. Now it was strong upon him. So, when this publisher had written to him, singing a siren song of his "highly colorful career," his position as a leading figure in one of the greatest of the industries, his place as "representative extraordinary" of a period in the world's history which was, alas, possibly drawing to a close, the letter had fallen upon fertile ground.

Why not? Mr. Benison was to do the actual writing, because writing was a highly technical affair, the learning of which had been rather outside of Martin's province. But to Benison it was easy, and this particular writing job would be very easy because they had the angle all set: the rise of one man from poverty to wealth—the rugged triumph over obstacles—the great organizing brain which was destined for victory. In the midst of the present uncertainties about the thing, a few good words in defense of capitalism could not go wrong. So—Martin had questioned himself—so? The mere fact that he'd been lucky didn't prove anything. And as for the great organizing brain, he knew plenty of men who had better brains than he had. What he had always possessed in superlative measure was energy, plus a certain peasant shrewdness which kept him on the right road, and a certain

peasant obstinacy which refused to take, no, for an answer. He'd always had his way with people, with men and with women, too. Though it was plain enough that Benison and the publisher didn't want to stress very much his way with women, except to make a suitable tribute to his beautiful wife, perhaps, and give credit to her part in his success. His wife was dead now. A great many of the women he had known were dead. It wouldn't hurt them to note how kind they had been to him.

Martin was perfectly willing to admit the importance of women. They had strange minds as well as strange bodies. You could pick a woman's mind as a cat picks a fish bone, and arise from the feast refreshed. Even the women who hadn't been worth the slight trouble he'd been put to concerning them, had all contributed something which could be traded for value, or used, as you could use forgotten loose change in a trouser pocket. When men reached a certain age of sophistication they were apt to take the view that there wasn't much difference in women except their looks. Martin had been through that phase, too. Sisters under the skin . . . Kipling had said that, hadn't he? "The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady—" Kipling had said a lot of things—articulated thought for a vast number of people who couldn't articulate it for themselves. Why didn't they get Kipling to write his book for him? But Kipling was dead, and probably wouldn't have been available in any case.

Why, a whole book could be written about the importance of women, leaving the steel industry and the capitalistic system out altogether. A book could be written treating Martin as an unregenerate old man who'd led a great life and didn't regret any of it. And it was true enough that repentance was a condition of the human soul for which he had little sympathy. What had he to repent? Some things he hadn't done, perhaps. He would have given a good many of the things he had done in exchange for some of them. It

would have been too bad if he had felt his past life complete. Then his present living would have meant nothing. As it was, it meant a good deal—even sitting here and thinking. His thoughts were running clear and free, like a stream unleashed of winter ice. The tremendous strength which had always stood him in such good stead had put a brake upon his thoughts and, now that this strength was ebbing, the brake was loose.

He saw the truth—or felt himself on the edge of seeing it. His whole past was transmuted by this alchemy of truth into something constant, something you could look at, at will, as you could look at the Rembrandt portrait there on the opposite wall, or the books in their fine bindings of tooled leather going up—row on row—nearly to the ceiling, the books he'd never read. Sitting here in his great chair, which was upholstered in velvet from a doge's palace, it came to him suddenly that the threads of his living had been woven to a pattern. The pattern was everywhere about him, in the design of the great flowery rug, in the grain of the teak-wood paneling, in the flickering sunlight of the late afternoon reflected in the brass fire irons which sat beside the small ornate fire place.

The cards were spread on the table before him. It wasn't a bad layout. There was an ace to be brought down at once, and a black queen with a red knave to cover her. You could turn up a new card then. Ah—the little harmless three! It was the same suit as the ace—useful if you dealt a deuce. Funny, what pleasure could be got from simple things like cards. If Martin were to lose everything he had—or almost everything—and just have his cards and shelter and warmth and food and someone to supplement his limiting abilities, he would be quite as well off as he was with all this elaborate machinery of living. He was oppressed by the burden of his possessions which he, by his own will, had brought into being about him. All the more so because everyone conspired to

make the burden light. He was treated as though he would break at a touch. People spoke to him softly. It was a wonder they didn't walk backwards in his presence.

And all this was part of the pattern his life had woven—the visible sign and symbol of his success. It was a pattern grown suddenly sinister, jungle tendrils strangling a growth which might otherwise have been free. He was a great man, and he didn't want to be a great man. He wanted to be inconspicuous and unimportant, so that what he did would pass without comment, so that it wouldn't take a courage out of the question at seventy-three, to prove to a woman how he felt about her now and forever. He had never been afraid of any barriers but the succession of barriers which had risen and fallen and risen again between them. He was an old man now. He was ill. His arteries were in a condition the doctors were most grave about. And Martha was a woman in the prime of life, and Martha was bound to him already by ties of blood—and of marriage, too, in a sort of way. A further strengthening of such ties could only degrade her, and hold her up to the defiling ridicule of this world in which he himself—by his own will—his own acts—had placed them both.

Martha would have subjected herself to any derision for his sake perhaps. There had been in the past—if there were no longer—a certain measure of criticism at her living here with him in his great house. People had wondered about her. He had wondered about her himself—he still did. He wondered what she really thought, and how she really felt, and if she ever really wanted to take him in her strong arms and hold him close and let him fancy—however briefly—that he was young again. She might have done that if he had asked her, if his pride hadn't stopped him. But her own exigency, her own desire, he had never known. And whatever, in the past, this might have been, any feeling she had about him now must be like an ore from which the metal had all been mined.

There could be nothing left now, except possibly her sense of an indebtedness which it seemed that no payment could discharge. This had become a part of Martha, innate and integral. It would be that with her more than a mere sense of duty, because Martha had never had a very marked sense of duty about anything.

She had a certain ruthless quality which somehow added to his love for her. Yet she had never been ruthless with him—merely just. Martha was always just. Hers was the justice of Jehovah, without pity. Though it might be pity she felt for Martin. Or it might be very much the feeling that Jesus Christ inspires in a different type of woman. Having compared himself to Jesus Christ, even though vicariously, Martin dealt out his next card. It wasn't a deuce, but a red seven, and he couldn't make use of it.

The luster of the day was beginning to fade, but Eric wouldn't come to press the light switches until he rang for him. He would put off ringing. What need had Martin of lights? And presently the street lights would pick out brightness in the dusk outside. He would sit here, not trying to see the cards any more, but seeing everything else so clear and plain. It would be like sitting in a darkened theater and watching the illumination on the stage.

He could hear voices in the hall below and a door opening and shutting, and presently the firm regular approaching beat of Martha's footsteps. Martha was coming to find out why he had not rung, and to tell him what she chose to tell him of this and that business adventure. As if he cared! As if he cared for anything except her presence. If there were a God—Jehovah or Christ or whoever—He would never have permitted Martha to have been born so late and Martin so early. This gap of years between them was a chasm Martin had spent all his energies in trying to span, and it was the only construction which had ever failed him. But perhaps there was a God who took care of such things, so they would

not happen. He might want His damned earth as a habitation for the meek.

2

Martin was trying to think of what he remembered first. Because that was what you did with a book, wasn't it—begin at the beginning, or as near as you could manage, and go on in an orderly fashion from there? He remembered looking up at everything. Everything was so big—people, houses, even pigs. All but the tiny pigs, the new born ones, and the big sow wouldn't let him go near those. Why, the mother cat, who herself was somewhat beneath him in scale, scratched him when he tried to pick up one of the kittens. Things were either big or forbidden. You couldn't win. You stumbled up steps which the big people took two at a time. You couldn't reach the shelf in the store closet where the little cakes were kept, or go exploring over the great chest top where there were such nice objects—the blue beads Mother wore on Sundays and the bright pin and the straw basket filled with balls of yarn and long sharp needles. You couldn't get into the farm wagon without being lifted. Hans would lift you if he had the time. Hans knew that it was pleasant to lie in the wagon when it stood idle in the shed and look up at the cobwebs in the shed ceiling.

That was in the summer, of course. In the winter the shed was too cold, and in the rainy seasons it wasn't comfortable either. But in the summer, with shafts of sunlight coming through the cracks, and the big spider working so hard, there was no nicer place to be. Hans said the spider made the webs herself, out of her stomach, and caught flies that way and ate them for breakfast. People tapped their foreheads when they spoke of Hans. That must have meant that he knew more than they did. He should. He'd been

working on the neighbor farms since the days of the old King Christian. King Christian was dead, and King Frederick had died too—just now—just the other day—and there was a new King Christian crowned.

The big people talked about such things in the evenings when they weren't talking about the animals and the crops. The room where Martin slept was right next to the kitchen where everyone sat after supper when the work was done. Sometimes the loud voices would wake him and he would lie in his bed listening to the talk and understanding what of it he could. His bed was small, and in the daytime it rolled under the big bed occupied by his father and mother. His brother Karl and his brother Peter had a room to themselves on the other side of the house. They were big boys. They worked in the fields in the summer time when they weren't going to school, and in the spring and autumn, too, when school was out. Martin was the little one, the baby. He was such a baby he couldn't join in their games, and in the fields he was a nuisance, stumbling about on his short fat legs and falling among the hummocks left by the root digging.

Helpless again as he was now, he remembered this early helplessness quite vividly. In fact, he remembered everything about himself much better than he remembered anything else, save perhaps certain places and impressions and a moment here and there. His mother and old Hans were still real. No one else, at this earliest period of his life, really mattered. Even his brothers were as unimportant to him then as they went on being. They had always touched his life so lightly. He remembered growing stronger, and ceasing to stumble, and being able to reach shelves and chest tops and being punished for his pains. But as he grew, that didn't bring him any closer to his brothers, because they were growing, too, and shed the interests with which he might have otherwise caught up. Why, they were through with school at fourteen, before he started going, at seven! You had to go

to school at seven. That was the law. And the Lyndendaals were law-abiding people.

It was at school he found out how strong he was. He had some good fights and won them. But strength was not for fighting, his mother had told him. Which was a funny thing for her to say, because Martin's father had been a soldier. He had fought in a big war just a year or so before Martin was born, and come back from it with a wooden leg. He was a fine-looking man in spite of it, with a great red beard that glinted in the sun and a big voice that could soothe or terrify; and how he could laugh! But he wasn't real to Martin—not even now, so many years after, when some things came real as they took their proper perspective. The wooden leg was real, and the beard and the voice, but not the man himself. He was quite a figure in that part of the country, and Martin's mother looked very proud when they went to church all dressed in their Sunday best and walked up the church aisle with a clatter no one else could honorably make.

The wooden leg was a fine thing, but it had its peculiar disadvantages. It made it a little hard to get about, and its owner had to be careful. Martin's father sat when he could, and was fond of sitting in a boat and fishing when he could spare the time. One spring evening he was fishing in the lake and, as he was alone, no one ever knew just what happened. It was likely that he had risen at a sharp tug on his line and, forgetting his maimed state in the excitement of the catch, had fallen overboard. His body was caught in the rushes, his attempt to swim hampered by one off-balance heavy boot—or so the scene was reconstructed. It wasn't till the next day that what remained of Martin's father, wooden leg and all, was brought back to the farmhouse.

Karl and Peter were young to run the farm alone. Besides, in a year or so now they must serve their time in the army, and what would Martin's mother do then? A stranger took over the place. Karl and Peter would stay on with him for the

present, as he had no sons of his own, and Martin and the widowed mother would spend the summer at her brother's farm in Jutland. Jutland was north and west of where they lived. It was part of the mainland, and yet it was Denmark, too. Martin remembered thinking what a big country Denmark must be. Why not? It contained his whole world. But there wasn't much time to think, because all these arrangements were made very quickly. They would go, they were going, they had gone.

It was a journey venturesome and delightful. Part by train—and Martin had never been on a train before—and part by ship—and Martin had never been on a ship before. His mother packed a great basket of food, as if for a picnic, and, though the weather was mild in June, they carried coats and shawls sufficient for an expedition to the North Pole.

The train went so fast. Martin, in all his life of travel, never again experienced so vividly the sensation of speed. And it belched out a black smoke which covered everything so profusely that you couldn't be scolded for your dirty face. And as for the ship, it wasn't like the pictures of ships he had seen, with great white sails, but had no sails at all and belched out black smoke, too, and made a swirling commotion in the water. The journey by ship was all too short. The greater part of their way was accomplished by train. And the second train they took was even faster than the first. Sitting there so snug and comfortable and watching the neat June countryside rush by, and exploring without reprimand the increasingly disordered but still rewarding food basket, it seemed too bad that sleep should overtake a boy so aptly placed. Martin fought off the intruder as long as he could, but it was a losing fight.

He woke to find himself in the arms of a man who he learned afterwards was his uncle. The man must have carried him right off the train, because there Martin was with his mother standing beside him, and their trunk and their

bundles, and in the distance the train going away. He struggled to the ground—he was a big boy and shouldn't be carried like a baby—and his uncle laughed and lifted him up to a high wagon with seats in it, drawn by a fine team of horses. They drove in the wagon for a long time. It must have been very late because it was dark, and in June darkness didn't come till the middle of the night.

There were lights at the new farm, and a woman called Aunt Karen greeted them at the door. She was very polite, but Martin got the impression that she was curious about them rather than enthusiastic. Another woman appeared—quite an old one—who brought him a pitcher of milk and a mug and some bread. He wasn't really hungry, but he ate and drank not to disappoint the old woman, who was trying to be kind. She left him alone with his food in a kitchen which was larger than the one at home and not so neat. The table at which he sat was very long, with many places all arranged with dishes and spoons. He counted the places—twelve. There must be a lot of people on this farm. He wondered where they were. He'd seen only his uncle and the old woman and Aunt Karen, who had immediately taken his mother off somewhere. He was alone in a strange room in the middle of the night, but there was really nothing to be afraid of. It wasn't because he was afraid that his consuming wish was for companionship. Then he looked up at some slight sound and a boy was standing in the doorway.

It would be luck indeed if every wish you made were so magnificently answered! The boy was hardly older than Martin was, but taller and thinner, with an odd perpetual smile on his face, as if he knew a lot of jokes he wasn't telling. He wore a long white nightshirt. There was something unreal about him, like a genie emerging out of cloud, and yet he was the most real human creature that Martin had ever seen. He was as important to him, even in that first glance, as his own growth and his own strength and his own helpless-

ness. He was even as important as his own questioning perceptions and pleasures and pains.

"Are you Martin?" the boy asked.

"Yes, I am Martin. Who are you?"

"I'm Axel, your cousin."

No one had ever bothered to tell him that he had a cousin. Or maybe they had, and he'd forgotten. He wouldn't forget now. In fact, Martin doubted if he ever forgot anything concerning Axel Christiansen. Oh, little things, perhaps, but not this night, not this meeting.

"Good day to you, Axel."

"Good day to you."

"Wouldn't you like some milk? There's more here than I shall want. *She* brought it to me and I couldn't say, no."

"Oh, Gran's always bringing people milk," said Axel. "No, I don't want any. Milk's for calves, I say, not humans."

Martin set down his mug. He'd never thought of it like that. Axel came forward into the room and sat down at the table. He broke himself off a piece of bread. "How old are you?" he asked.

"I'm nearly eight and a quarter," Martin answered. "And you?"

"Oh, I'm ten—or I shall be next winter. Don't you want to wash?"

"I suppose so."

"You better, before you get into a clean bed. I'll show you the shed where the water is. And there's a place with three seats—each a different size."

"That will be very nice," said Martin.

"For myself, I had a bath Saturday. I have one every Saturday—in a big tub. In the summer I take it in the shed and in the winter I bring the tub here in the kitchen where it's warm."

"Yes, you look very clean. Of course, I'd be clean, too, but I've been on a journey. Were you ever on a journey?" Martin

remembered hoping that Axel would say, no, but this was too much to hope.

"Indeed I was. I went to Christiania once—that's in Norway. Have you ever been to a city?"

"We live near Copenhagen."

"How near?"

"Fifty kilometres, perhaps. I expect to go there almost any time. If I hadn't come here I probably would have."

"You never can say what you'll do," said Axel, "until you've done it."

This was another point of which Martin had never thought. Axel was always saying things that seemed to open new vistas for thinking. He did it in a sort of grand manner, as if it were nothing, and went on to something else: "Where are you going to sleep?" He waved his hand with the bread in it, in a gesture which took in all the possibilities.

"Why—I—I don't know—"

"With your mother or with me?"

"With my mother, I suppose. She'll doubtless be lonely in a strange house. Just at first, anyway—"

"Oh, it's not strange to her. They say she used to live here once. She and my father are brother and sister. Did you sleep with your mother at home? Only babies do that, and you're not a baby."

"Of course not!"

"Then the sooner you get over thinking you are—"

"At home I have a whole bed all to myself."

"I have a whole room to myself," said Axel. You could never outdo him—not in any way that could be said, or told about. "It's a very nice room indeed," he went on. "You'll be lucky if I share it with you."

"Are you going to?" Martin asked.

"Perhaps. If my father says so I guess it will be all right. There was a boy here last summer, and he stayed in my room, and we had such fun. Only we threw the pillows about,

and one night the feathers came out—you should have seen them—all over everything—so that was stopped.” Axel rose. “Well, are you going to wash, or are you going to sit here all night?”

Martin was so excited that he couldn’t sleep much—not even with his mother. He kept waking up, and once when he woke he heard her crying. He’d never heard his mother cry before. She had gone through these past days quite dry-eyed. The sound frightened him. He whimpered a little himself, just because tears were catching, and then she stopped. He remembered the early daylight coming.

Yes, all that was as if it were yesterday. Axel Christiansen dominated him completely. But how was he to know then that out of Axel’s loins the domination would continue? How was he to know that Axel was part of his luck? What would he ever have been without him? What would he ever have done? How was he to know that Axel would be a failure and himself a success? It was as if some curious transfusion had been accomplished, and he had taken over into his own slow mind just so much of the quicksilver and the fire which was Axel’s. Just so much, and no more, not enough to divert him from the path of triumph.

Axel had, it must be said, a remarkably good opinion of himself. He didn’t think of himself as a child at all, but quite the equal of anyone. His acting like a child—particularly in the presence of his elders—being silent and for the most part obedient, was a matter of discretion, Martin came to realize, more than any inner conviction of inferiority. But of course that was a conviction which a being like Axel couldn’t honestly have possessed. He was a great one for starting things, delightful and fascinating undertakings, which Martin in his slow determined way would finish. There was that house the boys built on the little island by the river shore. They built it of fallen branches of pine and beech and thatched the roof with leaves. But it was Martin who made

the roof weather-tight—or almost so—when Axel had tired of house building and had gone on to fresher projects.

It wasn't all play, what the boys did. There were farm tasks such as chicken feeding, and the small wood to carry for the kitchen fire. Big boys of eight and nearly ten must bear their share of labor. Axel was so clever. He could put a halter on the new bay colt whom no one else could gentle. He could mend the nets the men took with them fishing in the winter. And Martin must be, in all ways which were possible to him, the equal of Axel. In one thing he excelled him—in the strength that his mother had told him was not for fighting. This made the balance between them more even than it otherwise might have been, because Martin couldn't expect to be, in ways which were not possible to him, the equal of Axel. He couldn't tell stories as his cousin did, or draw the funny pictures of the farm animals.

Which last disability on Martin's part was probably all for the best, considering the fuss raised about the picture of the cock and the hen. It was just a simple drawing made with the toolhouse pencil on a scrap of brown paper, but it cleared up for Martin a matter which he'd been rather befogged about. Things were indecent only if you paid attention to them—paid attention to them officially, as it were. On a farm the mating of animals was taken for granted. Everyone knew about it. Everyone saw it. It was an occurrence to be helped rather than hindered. But you didn't make pictures of it. And, if you did, you didn't leave them about for the official eye to see. Axel's well known discretion had for once been forgotten. It was a very funny picture. That was proved by the laughter of the farm hands and Martin's own laughter, though he didn't know exactly why he laughed. But Axel's father evidently didn't think it funny.

"What will we be drawing next?" he'd asked Axel, in the midst of trouncing him soundly for his ill judged portrayal of obvious fact,

Martin's mother, though she said nothing directly, must have heard about the picture, because that evening when they were alone for a bit, she made some comment about Axel's not being the best companion he could have.

"He's a fine smart boy," Martin had defended him, "and he's taught me a great deal."

"That's it," said his mother. There was a pause before she had something else to add. "You're not the same boy you were when you came here. Not the same boy at all."

His mother didn't like Axel. Martin had known that vaguely, but she'd never come out with it before. And now, in some manner Martin didn't wholly understand, she was traducing him. She was accusing the boy of things darkly evil, inferring that Axel had been for her son an instrument of corruption. And Axel wasn't that sort of boy at all. There had been a boy like that at school, a stupid creature with pale watery eyes and a furtive sneaking manner, who was always trying to inveigle the other children into privacies. He'd done less harm than he might, because the boys hadn't liked him and the girls had been afraid of him. There were such people in the world. You had to know about them sooner or later. But Axel wasn't like that, just because he drew a funny picture of a cock and a hen.

Martin now, thinking back, gave himself at the age of eight considerable credit for judgments which ordinarily would be the fruit of a far wider experience than he—at eight—could possibly have attained. He admired the boy rather more than he admired the old man. What had he learned in the many years intervening which was really worth the learning? He had learned to wield power—that was all—make other people do his bidding. He sometimes wondered if he really remembered this boy of eight as he was, or if he made for himself a composite portrait, half the real boy and half Martin Lyndendaal at seventy-three without the wrinkles. He remembered this talk with his mother in great detail.

Talks with his mother were so rare. She was never a prattling woman.

She didn't prattle then. After her statement about Axel there was quite a long silence. Martin wanted to say something to disprove all her inferences at once. It took him some time to think of something—and then it wasn't adequate: "Axel's done me no harm!"

Axel's accuser was standing before a little mirror in her room pinning up her hair which was still long and thick. She had fine well shaped hands and a free graceful use of wrists and arms. She turned from the mirror and looked at Martin. "I don't believe you can be a judge of that," she said. And then, after further pause, she added something else: "Besides, Axel doesn't always speak the truth."

"Why, you can't—always!" Martin blurted it out.

"I'm surprised at you, Martin! Your father would turn over in his grave were he to hear you. We thought you such a good truthful boy."

"I try to be."

"I hope you will always try."

He was glad now, as he looked back through the years, that he hadn't taken his mother's hope too much to heart. You didn't fight your way to the top of the heap by a too strict adherence to truth-telling.

He was getting in rather deep with this talk. He decided to change its subject. "How do you like it here, Mother—I mean, for yourself?" He managed for this question a very good imitation of the grave manner Axel could show when occasion called—and with a graver face, lacking the constant smile.

His mother had finished her hair and was busy tidying up the room, putting in its place clothing she had changed, picking a bit of lint off the braided cotton rug. "For myself? I like it well enough. No woman really likes living in another woman's house. But what's more important, they like having

me here. There's more work than your Aunt Karen can see to. She's not very strong. And Gran's a hard worker, but she's old."

"Gran isn't my gran, is she?"

"No, she's Aunt Karen's gran."

Martin pondered that human relationship. From his mother's manner, the talk was evidently over now, but Martin had the wish to go on with it. He wanted to bring it around to Axel again—say something more—show, irrefutably, and yet without any appearance of craft, what a fine clever boy Axel really was. If he could bring in some plan Axel had, some fine ambitious undertaking which Axel was arranging, the kind of thing no one could say was unworthy . . .

"How would you like to go to America?"

His mother's slipping attention was caught. "America! Listen to the child! And what should we do in America?"

"Axel's going when he's grown."

"A good place for him. I should think he might do very well there."

"I'm sure he will. And he says he'll send for us when he's settled."

"So? That's very kind of him, I'm sure. No, America's not for me, nor for you either."

"It's a big country," Martin urged. "And everybody's rich there."

"No richer there than elsewhere! I'll lay Axel has filled you with a lot of crazy notions. I shall be glad when fall comes and we go to my sister's place in Odense."

So casually as that, just by way of talk, Martin's world came crashing down. They were to spend the summer at the farm—only the summer—and he'd come to thinking they would stay there forever. Something of the shock of all this must have showed in his open boyish face, because his mother laid a hand kindly on his shoulder. "People in our situation, Martin, must do the best they can for themselves. There are

good schools in Odense for you, and I can find work and pay our way."

"I thought you said just now they like having you here? Why should you leave when they like having you?"

"It's for the summer when the work is heavy that they like having me. There are eight extra men to cook for now. In the winter they will be gone. I should be only a nuisance."

His mother had had much to say about truth-telling, and Martin knew perfectly well now that she wasn't telling it herself. She wouldn't be a nuisance, and she knew it. Aunt Karen would be glad to have her stay. And it wasn't on account of Axel either that she was leaving. There was something else. It was later—many years later—that Martin knew what it was. Odense was a city. Martin was to have the advantages which a city could offer, and not be brought up a farm boy like his brothers. It was too late to do much about Karl and Peter, but with Martin she was free.

"You'll like it in Odense," his mother went on. "It's a very fine place—very old—with many fine buildings. A great place for travellers to come. There are houses there called inns, where—by paying money—you can live grandly. It is in one of those that I shall get work. My sister knows a man who is a cook in the very biggest."

The summer drew to a close not too dark with the clouds of departure. That was Axel's doing. In fact, he took it quite gaily.

"In a way, it's too bad you're going," he told Martin, "and in a way it's not too bad, either. I hear Odense's a nice place, and when you come back here next year you can tell me all about it. You're a lucky boy. I wouldn't mind being in your shoes."

There was a picture of Odense in Axel's geography book. In the foreground was a big church—St. Canute's Cathedral—"one of the largest and finest buildings of its kind in Denmark," so Axel read out. "Oh, you'll find lots to do there—"

"I would, if you could come with me—"

Axel laughed. "Your mother might have something to say to that—and my mother, too. And my father wouldn't like it either."

Martin was a little disappointed in his cousin at this juncture. He had expected help, and all he received was cheerful acceptance of an unpalatable decision. This from Axel, who had such a mind of his own, who regarded himself as the equal of any of his elders.

"When can we do as we please, we boys?" Martin asked. "I mean, go or stay where we like? If I were to tell my mother that I wouldn't go to Odense—if you were to tell yours that you were coming, too—"

"But it wouldn't do any good!"

"Then when can we tell them such things?"

"Oh, in a few years more."

"In a few years more, you think we can do as we please?"

"We can do as we please now—about most things, that is to say."

"About little things," said Martin scornfully.

Axel looked at him. There was in the look an admiration Martin had never received from him before—not even when he had lifted weights Axel couldn't stir. "There are times when I think you have very big ideas. You'll surprise yourself some day—see if you don't."

His cousin was the first to voice the opinion that Martin would ever be in any way remarkable.

3

He surprised himself only when he looked back and saw how far he had come. That distance was what was remarkable about him. His boyhood years, at least, were quite unstudded by brilliance. In the good school in Odense he

displayed no brilliance whatever. It was true enough, he wasn't at the bottom, but neither was he at the top. When he went there at first he was having some trouble in learning to write. He didn't mind the trouble, because Axel wrote very nicely and wrote him letters, and he wanted to manage answers which could be sent without shame. He must learn to read, too, better than he did, because he must read Axel's letters for himself.

He had a good memory. This took him through history. And he had a natural head for figures. In other ways, compared to many of his fellow students, he was slow. The basic difference between them and him was that if a piece of work was too hard for them they stopped doing it, while he went on, no matter how hard it was. His strength was not only of muscle but of constitution, and a toughness of mental fibre also. He didn't know then what he afterwards found out, that he was considered handsome. He had no immediate use for his looks. People liked him—they noticed him. He possessed, even so early, the characteristic which has since come to be called personality. The term was overworked, Martin thought now. Applied to himself, it placed him in the same bracket with a great many people with whom he had nothing in common. You felt, when you saw him, that he was powerful, and how could you have felt that about him when he was a boy? There were other boys who were big and strong, and who worked hard, and had been taught nice civil manners by their mothers.

But whatever you felt when you saw him, and however far this attribute of personality was carried, the keeper of the inn where his mother worked in the kitchen liked something about him sufficiently to give him a job Saturday afternoons and Sundays running errands for the inn guests. It wasn't his mother's doing. She knew nothing about it till he walked in on her one day where she was paring vegetables. He shouldn't have penetrated to that part of the inn at all.

It wasn't for kitchen work that the innkeeper had issued him a fine blue cloth uniform with brass buttons down the front. Kitchen work, his mother thought, would have been better. Martin was aware that she wasn't pleased. The inn guests were very fine people, no doubt, and rich, but seeing them at such close range could do the boy no good. Their ways were not his ways.

Something of this she conveyed to him back at his aunt's house late that night, and he didn't know then how wrong she was. Their ways were his ways. It was his first sight of any luxurious living, and it was what he would have for himself some day.

It was generally admitted among those who knew Martin Lyndendaal best that it was his wife who had made him acquainted with what are generally called the finer things of life. But to all his wife's instruction, his wife's example, the inn at Odense was prologue. He saw men in fine clothes and women in finer, and food served course on course, with the table made clean between servings. He saw wine drunk, brought from the deep cellar in dusty bottles and handled as tenderly as eggs from the hen's nest. And the fine carriages there were—carriages just made for driving around on pleasure bent—carriages with springs so that no road bump would be jarring, and built so lightly the horses could trot as freely as the colts in the pasture. And at night the inn would be fairly ablaze with light, reflected everywhere in mirrors and jewels and the white shoulders of women. Sometimes there was music and dancing.

It was many years afterwards that Martin returned to that inn and occupied the suite usually reserved for royalty. He found Odense a very small city indeed, and the inn rather small and, to his expanded tastes, a little shabby and lacking the conveniences to which he had then grown accustomed. How could a blaze of light ever have come from these old gas-lit chandeliers, or the betweeded and bespectacled tour-

ists be the descendants of the glamorous houris of his boyhood? The life of the inn had gone in one direction, perhaps, and his own life in another.

But however he later regarded the place, and however it might have changed—or perhaps remained static in a changing world—its importance in Martin's ripening process was still true. And he made money there—the first money he had ever made—and, if it were mostly in small coins tossed to him carelessly for services rendered, it was still good legal tender useful for spending, or even for putting away in a little carved box he had which he kept safe in the chest beneath his bed. His aunt was a prying sort of woman. You didn't show her everything you had, by any means.

The money Martin made was the reason his mother let him go on working at the inn at all. Such fine new money it was, too, a new coinage altogether, as though it were minted in special celebration of Martin's earning. The krone—what a fine coin that was—why, sometimes a whole one came his way just for delivering a letter or seeing that someone's carriage was at the door promptly! The money Martin had seen at the farm was humdrum by contrast—the little skillings and the marks, even the fabulous rixdollars—all that was for a barter now past.

It was at this period in Martin's life, when he spent his time between the school, where his talents made no unwonted stir, and the inn, where the position he held was well down in the ranks of service, that he experienced the first stirrings of an unwavering and absolute faith in his own capacities. It was a faith, at this time, unsupported by any plans of ways and means to glory, but it was as unshakable as any belief in any infallibility. Thinking about it now, he knew it for an asset worn a little threadbare, but he could afford now to discard it as you discard any garment which has served its day.

The inn was important, not only for the way of life it

showed him, but because it enabled him to strut a bit before Axel. His cousin was always in the back of his mind. He kept fancying what Axel would think of this and what Axel would think of that. It was as if he saw things, not with his own crude vision, but with the high perceptive curiosity of the other boy. "You ought to have seen—" was a favorite letter-writing phrase he used in report of wonders to behold, but it was very much as if Axel had seen. It was fun, however, writing letters, once you got the hang of it. He even wrote to his brothers, Karl and Peter, and must have surprised them a great deal, signing his name in big scrawling letters—*Martin Lyndendaal*. Karl, the older one, was starting his military service the following year, and Peter would then work the farm on some sort of sharing basis with the man who had taken it. But what were Karl and Peter, what would they ever be, but soldiers and farmers? There was a quality in Axel which made Martin never place him in any such category.

Martin himself was no longer a farm boy, whatever else he might be. "The country will seem strange to me," he wrote, "it's so long since I've been there. But my mother was afraid she would not be taken back again at the inn if she went away for one whole summer, which is just when they are so busy with people travelling about. And I thought I would stay, too, and work all the time as there is no school then. But next summer I promise to come. I can't wait for the good times we will have. You will be surprised when you see me, I have grown so big. I am writing my name here in blood instead of ink. I took it from my finger as you said to do. That makes a blood bond between us." As if there were not blood enough between them, without that! "I will be twelve years old," he wrote, "and you will be nearly fourteen. So the time goes."

The country didn't seem strange to Martin, after all. It had remained curiously the same. All the old landmarks,

the river, even the ruins of their log house, and the dairy barn and the hog lot with its deep firm fence, and the wide roll of pasture, and the big kitchen with its long table and places set for food—it all was there. This second summer Martin spent at his uncle's farm was his first experience of going back into the past. Before that every place he had gone to had been a new place.

His aunt and uncle seemed a little different. He noticed a slight grizzling in his uncle's hair of which he had not formerly been aware, and his aunt's face—always sharp—was now sharper than a human countenance could rightly be. But these changes were so subtle that he forgot them in a few days, replacing past memories with the present. And many of the animals had gone to their appointed destinies, and been supplanted by descendants or fresh stock. The bay colt was a fine horse now, and Axel rode it. He rode all the way to the train to meet them, and all the way back beside the farm wagon, like an outrider or an escort. Axel hadn't changed at all, except in inches. He was still taller than Martin was, and thinner; he still had that same grand air of owning the earth, and the heavens above it, too. But Martin had known that Axel would be the same.

The boys took up their life together exactly where they had left it off. What changes there were—and there must have been changes—they themselves didn't notice. They had less time for play, of course, for they were big boys now. Martin's uncle, looking at his broad shoulders with an appraising eye, put him to work he couldn't have done before. There was work in the fields with crops and cattle. In this he was competent enough, but his real knack was with machinery of any kind. He could mend a broken harrow as neatly as a blacksmith might have done it. So this summer there was no inn, no school, no city of Odense. It wasn't that these things hadn't become a part of Martin's life, and

weren't still there within him. But they didn't come to the surface, save for occasional reminiscences. He was too busy. And he didn't strut before his cousin as much as he had in his letters.

He found himself concealing his newly acquired knowledge. He didn't, for instance, tell Axel that at school he was beginning to learn English. All boys in city schools had to learn English and German. Denmark, so the teacher had said, traded with these countries, and it was important to know something of the language. Danish was not a world language—merely local. How Axel's smile would break into laughter if he were told such a thing as that! You didn't tell Axel things—he told you. What superiority you possessed lay in the things you could do, like mending the harrow or holding a straight furrow in the second plowing.

His mother said, if he came to the farm a third summer, he should be paid for what he did, not only his food and a place to sleep, but regular wages. He was doing nearly a man's work, she told him. That was praise, indeed, from one who was sparing of praise. It meant she was proud of him.

Martin, in thinking about this now, smiled wryly. He tried to recall a single way in which he had ever been proud of his own son. He knew some people thought that he hadn't been fair to Julian. But parents had a right to their pride, and, if they were cheated of that right, how could they be fair?

The next time Martin received praise, he felt it undeserved. It was luck, saving Axel from the bull. What was so remarkable about it? What could anyone have expected him to do? Stand aside and watch Axel be crushed to a pulp by the bull's horns and trampled underfoot?

The two boys were on their way to get the cows in for the evening milking. They were walking along the pasture path and talking—or, rather, Axel was talking. He carried

a small rod and gestured with it dramatically. Martin noticed the pasture was getting a bit dry. He could stir up dust in the path with his heavy farm boots. The first hint they had that anything was wrong was the cracking of a twig behind them. It sounded as though one of the cows were there, instead of well up ahead with the rest of the herd. They turned to see. The beast was standing about twenty feet back of them.

"The gate of the bull enclosure must have come open," Axel said.

"Yes," said Martin, looking towards the barns, "it is open."

The bull didn't live on the Christiansen farm, but was there, as it were, on a visit. Some bulls were safe enough if you knew how to handle them, but this one had rather a bad name. Some farmers wouldn't take him—even for the improvement of their stock—but Christiansen had had him before and had never experienced any serious trouble. His service was worth the risk, Christiansen had said. It was worth any risk, just to look at him, Martin thought, with the blue sky above him and the green clover below him, and his clean-marked black and white bull hide shining in the sun. He looked not up but down, his great proud neck bent a little, and his four feet—beneath the legs delicate but strong—planted so squarely in the sod, you would be surprised if they would ever move. He lifted one, finally, and pawed. He tossed his head. Then he took a step forward. Martin wasn't afraid at all, but Axel—knowing more about animals—measured the distance to the fence.

"Run for it," he said.

He started running at once. Martin, having to learn the need of haste, stood still a moment more. It was the moving figure the bull charged. He passed Martin with a rushing bullet-like movement and caught Axel only half-way to the fence and tossed him. He paused then—perhaps to savor the pleasures of the kill—and it was then that Martin per-

formed the great act which made him a hero. He rushed at the bull and managed, by sheer luck—with a touch of determination and quickness and strength—to scramble onto the animal's back. The back was broad and afforded no safe harbor. He slid forward and got his legs firmly entwined around the neck. The bull then abandoned the prey on the ground and set himself only to shake free of this sudden and impudent visitation. A wild ride followed, more in place on the prairies of the western hemisphere than in the quiet farm country of the Danish peninsula. Martin clung. He clung like a burr.

Axel, essentially unharmed, and coming to his senses and rising, wouldn't believe at first the spectacle his eyes offered. He resumed his interrupted and ill-advised dash to the fence, and sat on top of it and shouted. He told Martin afterwards he shouted for help. Anyway, it was a sight worth shouting about. By some unexpected lurch at last, Martin's grip was loosed. He was on the ground and the bull was trotting away to put as much distance as he could between himself and his rider. It took the craft and strength of three men to get him back into the corral. Martin was a hero. It was the sort of legend from which gods are made. He heard the story about himself every time he went back to Denmark. It even crossed the Atlantic, with embellishments, long after the bull had ceased to breathe.

That was the surface value of the incident. It made Martin a hero. The value to Martin lay deeper. For the first time, it placed Axel definitely in his debt. It changed the balance of power between them, and therefore the quality of their friendship. Though, in one way or another, Axel still cast his spell.

It was a spell concerning which the old Martin tried to be honest with himself. He was so honest he leaned over backwards. He admitted the presence of an inversion which might have been of serious danger save for the essential maleness possessed both by Axel Christiansen and by himself. They

were both far removed from any effeminacy. Martin, looking back, admitted he had committed certain sins, but there were some he had never committed, simply because his taste hadn't lain that way. There would have been all the opportunity in the world for an abnormal relationship to have developed between himself and Axel. But, even more emphatic than the factual lack of such relationship, was the lack of any temptation in such direction. And yet they cared about each other a great deal. Axel must have cared for Martin, because he wasn't the kind of person to bother about you if he didn't want to; and Martin knew how strong his own attachment was.

It was many years—far too many—before this attachment even approached its legitimate goal. Martin knew quite well that a large proportion of his devotion to Martha Christiansen had its seed in that early pre-manhood intentness.

But he hadn't reached Martha yet in his thinking of himself. He must try to put her out of his mind, because during all these earlier years she had been an unborn creature, soulless in the ether, and she had no place—no place whatever—in the processes of his development. What he had felt for her father, at a period long before Axel Christiansen had conferred upon himself the boon of fatherhood, couldn't possibly—by any prescience—have been affected by her. He was trying to decide now, once for all, just what this feeling was which he had had for Axel. He could reach about it no definite conclusion—merely look at it—set it out, as cards are set out on a table, face up. If it indeed were love, it was an exaltation of love, and sufficiently all-embracing to keep him free of the petty experimental excursions in which well-grown peasant boys, boys who worked in inns, boys who played in the streets of cities, indulged their youthful curiosities.

The sex not his own could be very ornamental—that he granted. These fine ladies at the inn were well worth looking

at, some of them. And there were milkmaids on the big estate near the Christiansen farm who were quite lovely in a blowzy sort of way, with round red cheeks and bright eyes and full laughing lips. They swung their hips as they walked, their breasts were firmly outlined beneath their tight bodices, their arms were smooth and firm. But Martin didn't long, even secretly, as he knew some boys did, to have any contact with them closer than the far side of the road. In fact, women were apt to frighten him, strip from him the years of his strength and land him again in stumbling infancy. There was one exception to all this—at least one—which survived his memory.

He didn't know the girl's name. He doubted if he had ever known it. She was in some manner connected with the blacksmith who had a smithy in the next street. She had the advantage of her environment. Removed from that, Martin might never have noticed her. It had become increasingly apparent that Martin's successful mending of the harrow was not an accident. What hours he could spare from his lessons and his work were spent at any neighboring forge which permitted his presence. There was a perfume to hot metal unmatched by the perfumes of Araby, and the sparks struck by hammer on anvil scattered as little red blossoms scatter in a breeze. Any girl would have seemed desirable to Martin in such a setting. This one was older than he—possibly sixteen—and had an unruly mass of red hair, fiery in the half-light. She was tall and held herself very straight, and—as she stood waiting for an answer to some message she had brought the blacksmith—she looked at Martin with a kind of boldness, and yet as if she didn't really see him. They met again more than once. In all, perhaps a hundred words passed between them. But she, obviously, could not be seriously concerned with a boy younger than herself, and he—as obviously—could not press a suit destined to failure. She was memorable only as being the remembered exception to

Martin's general indifference at this time. He thought about her a good deal and imagined situations which had no chance of fruition.

Martin was fourteen. He could stop school if he wished. His brother, Karl, wrote that if he were to come back to the farm the two of them might be able to manage it. The man who had taken it over was only a tenant. Both the brothers, Peter as well as Karl, were through with their military service, but Peter had gone away to another place. Perhaps Peter might be induced to return. The three of them could certainly manage. In all this detailed statement of the possibilities, Karl had reckoned without his mother. She announced, in no uncertain terms, that she had not spent six years of her life in an inn kitchen in order that Martin return to the farm. She surprised Martin, and surprised the sister with whom they still lived, by refusing to consider the offer of her eldest son.

"Let Karl have the farm. It should be his by right, as he is the eldest. Let him send for Peter. That is a matter between the two of them. But you, Martin—you will do better elsewhere. Your lessons are not over yet, and, when they are, I am thinking you can go to the metal works in Stockholm."

"You're so wise, so very wise," said Mrs. Lyndendaal's sister. "Martin would be wasted on the farm. Such a fine smart boy as he is!"

At the time, Martin had thought this enthusiastic support of his mother's refusal quite unbiased, and—for it—forgave his aunt all the little things he had never liked about her, her fussing and her prying and all the rest. The fact that the board Martin and his mother paid her meant a good deal to her, and pieced out the frugal living she made as a seamstress, didn't occur to him till later. He wasn't thinking about that. The metal works in Stockholm—you couldn't have offered him more if you had given him a king's crown. . . .

And so, between the women, it was settled that they would

not go back. Martin sometimes wondered what his mother afterwards thought of her judgment in this. For a while there, it couldn't have seemed so good. For a while? Why, never, as far as she was concerned. But people must make judgments without knowing how they will fall, or what must be gone through with before justification comes, or if it ever comes.

Fourteen—fifteen. Martin grew four inches in that year. He could hardly wait for the chance to measure himself beside Axel. The smith offered him work at the forge, but he was making good money at the inn now—nothing the smith could match—and he had to look ahead. New hands at the metal works made next to nothing. At the inn he wore a porter's blouse. He outgrew his uniforms too fast, and he was certainly big enough to carry trunks. Too big, perhaps.

Women were ornamental—at least some of them were. Martin had long admired them from a distance, as has been said. You admire the tiger within the cage. Removal of the cage bars would bring into play emotions of a different sort. There had been, as has again been said, that one exception. One early spring, Martin just turned sixteen, the one exception still held. He was, indeed, a fine smart boy—hardly a boy any more, with the first down of manhood on his cheek—and he had never done anything of which those to whose credit he was could be ashamed. He was hard-working, loyal, cheerful, honest, kind. In all small ways he did as he was told. He was, thought Martin, judging himself from afar, a little too richly deserving of praise to have been quite human. Only the good die young, could be taken in two ways. But those who praised him in word and thought didn't always know what was going on in the marrow of his nature. There was that unwavering faith in himself. Sooner or later, he knew, he would be capable of accomplishing anything. Some things could wait, his ambition being large enough to encompass patience. And his selfishness was complete enough to

scorn the petty selfishness of the mediocre. He often wondered what he would have done if his mother had accepted Karl's offer to return to the farm. Martin would have gone, of course, but he wouldn't have stayed. And he wouldn't have committed the appalling act which—even now—it was difficult for him to believe in, though he knew it had happened.

He'd done many things in his life impulsively, on the spur of the moment. But that was either because they didn't matter very much, or because he was guided by that sort of second sense of his which came to his rescue on a number of occasions. But, in this instance, this sense was not involved, and—without it—it was the only thing he'd ever done which was bigger than his deliberate intention—more important—more devastating. And so it was difficult to believe. It wasn't of a pattern with the rest of his life. He wondered how murderers felt about themselves. He had never committed a murder. He was too prudent. And for the crime lacking malice aforethought he lacked the temper. He governed his passions with a loose rein, but he usually governed them. There was no liquor so potent and no woman so seductive that he could forget himself utterly. He usually knew his major intentions. Except this once.

4

He had two separate and distinct memories of the woman who called herself La Paloma. He remembered her as the irresistible being who took his fancy so completely that it wouldn't matter if the world were to go up in smoke the next moment, provided—first—he might possess her. There was in her a sort of emanation which broke through the barrier-shyness of his youth, his inexperience, his normal reasoning hesitation. She had for him the magic a troll might have, dancing on the greensward in the dark of the moon. But

this wasn't a greensward. It was a room at an inn. And she wasn't a troll, and he had never seen her dance, featured as she was in a ballet rumored to be supported by a prince. She had hair which was a black cloud about her face. She was small and quite thin. But he didn't mind that. His own flesh was firm enough for two.

He remembered her again many years after. Impelled by curiosity, he had attended an occasion at which she, in her celebrity, was the guest of honor. No troll now, but a woman all hedged about with the trappings of civilized success, talking with a certain crisp wit in her very precise English, and being gracious to all those who were assembled to do her honor. The gathering would be written about in the New York papers, which was as it should be. Martin had joined the throng around her, and bent over her hand. She had looked at him, and then looked again.

"You know, Mr. Lyndendaal, it is a very stupid thing to say, but I am quite sure that we have met before. I do not know where. I noticed you when you arrived this evening. I asked your name, which meant nothing to me, though of course I was told what a great man you are. You must forgive my ignorance."

Almost all women made their little bid for Mr. Lyndendaal's attention, so the group within earshot regarded this long speech without too much surprise. Martin remembered offering La Paloma his arm. They walked away, chatting.

"We met in Odense," he said.

"Odense? That is in Denmark, is it not?"

"Yes, that is in Denmark. You were staying at an inn there. I was the porter who brought in your trunk. I set it down and then you asked me to move it somewhere else. I am Danish—you—"

"Austrian."

"We spoke a little German and a little English, which you expressed wonder that I understood at all. You were wearing

a sort of coat of white lace with frills, starched and stiff—and tied with ribbon—”

“You need not go on!”

“I should not have begun.”

“No, you should not.” Command was in her voice, and fear, too. For a moment she said nothing. Then she asked a question: “What did you do when you were dismissed from the inn?”

“I went to sea.”

“Were you at sea long?”

“Six years. You had me dismissed, but you did not tell the whole truth. It could have been worse.”

“Yes, I could have had you thrown into prison, and appeared in court against you, and made a terrible scandal for myself. Even my maid agreed that such would not have been the thing to do. But she would have thought it very strange had I not complained at your impertinence.”

“And so good a maid must not be permitted to think things strange?” Martin put it as a question.

“Naturally not!”

“She is permitted everything else—to come to your room unannounced—”

“Too late—”

“If she had come later still, I might now be a mill superintendent in Stockholm. I owe her—and you—so much. I am here to-night to thank you.”

“It would seem, almost that you are here to gloat over me!” She spoke rather gaily. The fear was gone, and the command, too.

“Oh, that is just my rough manner, Madame. Think of me as on my knees before you, asking forgiveness. I saw to-day, in a jeweler’s window, a black pearl which is very beautiful. If it were on your gown there, I could regard it as a peace offering.”

“Perhaps—”

"You will receive it in the morning."

"You are very lucky," La Paloma went on. "I might have shot you. I should have had that right. It is a wonder that someone else has not done so."

"I assure you, no one else has ever had the same cause."

"Curiously, I believe you. It would be the only explanation of your survival. And yet, if that is true, you are a very remarkable man to have come here to see me. Have you no shame?"

"It has been said of the Danes that they weep neither for their sins nor for their dead."

"I wept."

"But you are not a Dane, Madame, and it was not your sin."

Martin made this last assurance as a very gallant gesture, indeed, because he had learned in this second meeting that his own sin had not been quite what he had, at one time, supposed it. The troll had fooled him with her weeping and her terror—he would have been simple to fool—but later he had wondered. Her silence had been too easily gained by a hand across the mouth. Even her acquiescence—a limpness which had shot a lightning flash of horror into the tempest of his fervor—had long bred a doubt in him. And now he knew.

He had come forward this second time impelled by curiosity, not primarily to see the woman—he knew she would have changed—not to receive the forgiveness of which he had spoken, but to discover just how far his madness had taken him. Even though he did not weep for his sins, he liked to know what those sins were. That first meeting was still sufficiently unbelievable. It was, in fact, as undeserving of any reality as this second contact was credible, correct and charming.

They had found an unoccupied corner for their talk, but they must now desert it. He could not hope to keep her indefinitely from her friends, or from those others who, like him—

self, had come to see her. At parting, as at meeting, he bent over her hand.

"When you accept the pearl I will know that you are no longer angry with me. You will not deny me that satisfaction?"

"I will not deny you."

"You were angry with me for so many years."

"And what woman would not be angry at being attacked by a porter?"

"What answer can I make to such a question?"

What answer could anyone make to La Paloma, who was smiling a little as she spoke? There was still a faintly troll-like quality about her.

Martin had promised himself to see her dance some time. But he had never seen her again at all. And now of course, like so much else, it was too late. He had outlived her by a long time. But he hadn't outlived those two distinct and separate memories, which still remained as clear to him, and as well preserved for his sight, as a museum exhibit in a glass case.

Of other circumstances surrounding his dismissal from the inn his memory was short. He had forgotten, as it were deliberately, all but the most salient details of his going. There was always a part of your life which never seemed to have happened. There had been a time when Martin had taken this phenomenon for granted, but now these blank spots stood out. Must the illness of the body at last communicate itself to the brain? He didn't feel it had done this in his case. Long before his illness had begun, he had formed a habit of forgetting things, and what impact they had left lay buried too deep to disinter. He hadn't wanted to remember, and now he couldn't.

He would have liked to recall so many things about the Denmark of his youth. It had been a place compact and self-contained, with a sort of flavor all its own. It was a

country of traditions, nicely balanced with a forward-looking and practical side. This view of it, he had once been vouchsafed, was of a scene infinitely precious, a scene long threatened with extinction, if not already extinct. Denmark wasn't like that any more. And there must have been factors—social, political, economic—which, if as a boy he had noted and remembered, would have shown him at first hand the change that had come over the land of his fathers. What he remembered of the old order was so small, so wholly personal, so lacking in the faintest echo of a larger issue. It was, Martin had to admit, unworthy of the greatness which had later become his own. But there was nothing to be done about it now.

People who record their lives usually seem to lead those lives in the very corridors of glory. The epochal event is intimately theirs. Had they served at an inn, kings and ministers would have flocked to the place. The turning points of history would have been interwoven with their own moments of crisis. But during Martin's sixteen years he had seen, at close range, exactly one celebrity—already noted—and her medal of distinction was, at that time, very freshly minted. It was not until much later that he had rubbed elbows with the authentic great. He had driven through palace gates then. He had chatted with kings and princes. They were fine and gracious gentlemen and he was an important countryman. This had, perhaps, its element of humor, and proved that his own memory of certain details was no shorter than the memory preserved by the scene of his disgrace. Why, even at the inn itself, when he returned there years later, he found no one who connected the rich American of Danish origin with the offending porter.

As for himself, it was as if the shock of the thing had bred a vagueness in his thoughts, like a smoke screen used by ships in battle. It was just here and there that he recalled what had happened.

He remembered being called to the little room where the business of the inn was transacted, and finding his mother there, fresh from the kitchen, and her accusing eyes upon him.

"Martin, Martin, what have you done?"

This was something which no one seemed to know, except Martin himself, who remained silent. He was being discharged without a character, and his mother, who would have gone with him, was told to remain. There was much violent talk by the innkeeper, but Martin didn't wait to hear the end of it. As he turned and fled, purely an automatic reaction on his part, the last thing he remembered was his mother's half rising, and her troubled questioning face. It was no way to leave her, who had done so much for him. But he did leave her, and ran through the streets in his porter's clothes, and home to his aunt's house. Providentially, his aunt was out. He must have done some packing then, some rough sorting of his possessions. He took his money and a few other items, and left behind all the clothes belonging to the inn.

He never did know how he got from Odense to Copenhagen. It may have been by the ordinary channels of travel, or it may have been by other means. He knew a man who had a boat on the canal. There was the fjord and a stretch of open sea, and then the land again. He must have passed quite close to his old farm. It didn't occur to him to stop there. Why Copenhagen was his goal, he never knew. Perhaps it was because he had once told Axel he would go there. Axel had replied that you never could say what you would do until you'd done it. Copenhagen was a great place for ships. A ship would offer the ultimate in flight, and a big strong fellow like Martin had almost his choice of ships.

In his own mind, he must have been a criminal fleeing from justice, though it was clear enough that his victim hadn't told all that had taken place. She had repeated no tale of violence. And yet this precipitate and unreasoning de-

campment . . . Why had he not stopped at the old farm, where Karl surely would have welcomed him? Why had he not crossed country in an opposite direction and gone to Axel? Why hadn't he got, somehow, to Stockholm, and applied for work at the labor he loved? Or why shouldn't he have waited at his aunt's house, and faced his mother and groveled before her and asked forgiveness? These were questions Martin had never been able to answer. Or at least the only answer he could give, which had nothing to do with any remembrance, was so fantastically at odds with every tenet of his faith, that he couldn't accept it as valid. He had no belief in unseen forces, and therefore he must strike out the chance that it was some form of fate or destiny which had guided his migration. He was filled full of the hysteria of escape, though no god or devil was at his heels. He had no sense of conscious will, and yet without it, and without reason, any consciousness he possessed was all within himself.

There, in that room at the inn, beholding a woman who met the need of his own nature in such completeness, he had gone crazy. He had evidently remained crazy for several days. And even that was not the answer. Because, if it had been, when these several days were over and he had come to himself, he would have set himself to repairing in some measure the sorrow he must have been aware that he had caused.

"Martin, Martin, what have you done?"

He would have gone back to his mother as quickly as he could. He would have lied to her, if necessary, and told her he had done nothing. He would have taken up his life where he had broken it off, gone to Stockholm to the metal works, carried out her great plans for him, instead of placing those plans in jeopardy, instead of leaving her forever without any word or letter or message.

He did intend to write from the next port. But the next port slipped by, and other ports were approached and left behind, and he made no sign. He was busy feeding the maw

of a ship's boiler with coal—that first ship and other ships.

"You can learn a good deal in an engine room if you keep your eyes open." He had said that to the publisher. It was true, what he had said.

Everything was true that he had told the publisher, but the man had evidently wished to repaint the canvas of truth with a nice picture of the emigrant boy—penniless—alone. He had been neither penniless nor alone, Martin had explained, but these two denials were the least of the denials he might have made. However, he had seen no reason to explain himself further. After all, it wasn't the publisher who was to do the actual writing of this book of Martin's, but this young man, this Mr. Benison. And Benison belonged to a rather different school of thought, not nearly so desirous of stressing only the inspiring side of struggle.

"I want to see you," Benison told Martin, "with your shirt off—with the hair right on your chest. You mustn't feel that there's anything you can't tell me. Then J. K. and I will go to bat over it."

J. K. was the publisher.

"I see," Martin answered. "I am to expose myself, and then it is to be decided for me just how far the sheet is to be drawn up. Perhaps my daughters might wish to be consulted."

"Your daughters—and Mrs. Julian."

Martin looked at the young man sharply. "By all means—Mrs. Julian."

"In writing a book—particularly an autobiography—you must establish a mood—decide upon a certain slant. Then there's nothing left to do but set it down and pick it up. And to-day the non-fiction field is wide open." Benison's enthusiasm was heart-warming. "There was never a time," went on the young man, "more favorable to the publication of a good vital history of a man like you. You're the kind of news people want to hear. People are tired of all this European

stuff—communism and nazism, Hitler and his designs on Poland—the war in China—what Stalin is thinking about, if anything. Besides, some people regard the day of individual effort as being over—particularly the post-war generation. They don't half try, because they feel in advance there isn't any use. Look at the college graduates who can't get jobs—look at the engineering degrees going begging! You *are* an engineer—and see what it's got you." Benison, in a broad hand wave, included the Rembrandt and the little bronze Victory and the screen of Spanish leather which stood before the open door.

"That's just what I'm not," said Martin.

"Meaning—"

"Meaning, I'm not an engineer. I'm not the possessor of one of those engineering degrees you ask me to look at. I've always been able to hire technical help." Martin inclined his head towards Benison, as if to place him in this category.

"That's very interesting, Mr. Lyndendaal—very. But I hardly think J. K. would—"

"Want it known? Probably not. But you said I mustn't feel there was anything I couldn't tell you."

"You mustn't. I can't do this work without the facts. But you can see how the public might regard—"

"I can quite see. I am to expose myself only to you. What would you say if I demanded that this exposure be not merely a glimpse for your own, and possibly for 'J. K.'s,' private edification, but were to be in the nature of a permanent exhibit?"

"I'd say it was a great idea. But I don't believe anybody could sit down and tell the whole truth about themselves and nothing but the truth, so help me God!"

"They could make the attempt."

"Not me," said Benison, "I'm under contract to J. K."

Martin rang for Eric then, not to send the visitor away, but to provide him with a drink.

"Scotch and soda?"

"Thanks. Don't you drink, Mr. Lyndendaal? I hate to drink alone."

"Just a little mineral water."

"What kind of mineral water is it?"

"I don't think you'd like it. It has a bitter taste. I sometimes wonder what the doctors are keeping me for."

"For a lot of things, Mr. Lyndendaal. This book, for one."

"This book J. K. is promoting?"

"Of course. There isn't any other book, is there? You haven't been approached by anyone else?"

"No. But it wouldn't matter if I had. Nobody else will get it."

"That's a promise?"

"A promise. You see, Benison, this book remains as yet wholly within my own mind. I think about it a great deal, but I can't talk about it, save in the most general terms, not even to you."

"I think that can be fixed. I could ask you questions and you could answer them."

"My son, you wouldn't know what questions to ask."

"Leave it to me, Mr. Lyndendaal, leave it to me."

Which was exactly what Martin had no intention of doing, of course, but Benison didn't know that. There were a number of Martin's intentions, both past and present, which Benison didn't know, and never would. Yet Martin liked him—found him amusing. Martin began to realize that this, rather than the book in view, was his reason for letting the young man come to see him so often.

5

At sixteen, whatever Martin had done, he was a boy. At eighteen he was a man. The sea which brought him manhood

was a turbulent sea. It was dirty, it was profane, it held many unlovely sights. He had been reared frugally but cleanly. He had been fed and sheltered and, in a manner, shielded. His independence, at the inn and the school and even in the streets of the town, had been felt as a man might feel rain, who has a roof overhead. The roof leaks a bit, the rain seeps in through the cracks in the sills, but he never has to withstand the full force of downpour. Martin had been like a swimmer who is secured against drowning by a rope around his middle. Now there was no rope. He had had good schooling, but now what did he know? Practically nothing. The stokehole of a tramp steamer out from Copenhagen with a cargo of herring was not an arena, Martin found, for the display of schoolbook knowledge.

Just as the stokehole was beneath the engine room in actual placement, so was Martin beneath every one of his fellows. They were firemen, at least. He was a helper, a handyman, a coal passer. They were older than he was. Some of them were even bigger. There was a Swede and a Yankee and an English cockney, and a West Indian negro and a Chinaman. There was a Dutchman and a couple of men of some mixed Slavonic origin, and the Chief was a Dane from Bornholm. They were hard as the iron plates which covered the ship's wooden hull—as hard and as corroded. It was as if the scrapings of all the seven sea bottoms had gone to their making.

It may have been cowardice which had brought Martin to that environment, but it wasn't cowardice which kept him there. He found himself—and at no time could he have told when the discovery was made—holding his own. But, holding it, he could compare himself to a good quality of iron ore which had been subjected, successively, to the varying processes to turn it into steel. At eighteen these processes were far from finished. But the making of steel has become an exact science. Temperatures can be measured and chemicals weighed. Methods can be chosen out of human inventive-

ness. The flux turning boy to man can never be wholly foretold.

Those first years at sea had a way of piling themselves into a few distorted recollections. There was a steady dull consciousness of smells—oil, coal dust, the grease of cooking, the rancid closeness of human sweat. There was physical discomfort, unrelieved, constant. And there was the glare from the open doors of the boilers—glare and heat. Between shifts, sometimes, you could get out to the cleanness and silence—only comparative—of a lower deck. But the coal dust would still be ground into your skin, and your muscles would stiffen in the cold air. Yet Martin didn't think he'd been unhappy. There had been something here he'd wanted, and he'd taken it.

He remembered a storm. The waves didn't look like water at all, but great solid walls of a substance as hard and as unfriendly as granite. But granite couldn't have broken over the little ship without crushing and shattering her. It couldn't have formed that mass, molten and moving, which carried her to heights, and then to depths, dropping suddenly. The craft, down in the trough, had a grinding circular preparation for the next rise. Martin would have known more of the storm from the bridge, or the deck, or the cabin. Keeping up steam became the difference between death and survival. There were four boilers. One of them had broken. Another was cracked. That left two to bear the whole load. If strength were not for fighting, it was for this. The broken boiler they would have to do without until they reached port. The cracked one they would try to mend, though it might prove too far gone.

You couldn't do the neat and quick jobs of repair work then that became possible in later years. There were no acetylene torches, no welding rods. There was nothing but patching with plate and rivet. It was an awkward job at best, and the Chief—who was clever that way—had a bad hand.

Martin didn't remember the cause of the accident, but he remembered seeing him there with a nice clean doctor's bandage in place of fingers. The bandage wouldn't stay clean for long. All the men had been working in extra shifts and were pretty well done in. Martin wasn't tired, which may have been why he succeeded in mending the boiler when none of the others could. It was his first step up.

He remembered a smoke-filled room in a northern port, and drinking liquor which was as white as water and much thinner, and went down his beer-accustomed youthful gullet like molten lead. It hadn't made him sick, though his companions had hoped it would. He would have been ashamed not to match them drink for drink, damned Swedes that they were—Swedes and Finns and Russians. And the little English cockney in the corner. The cockney was drinking whiskey. He'd spend all his pay that way. There were girls, too—coarsened replicas of the bright fresh peasant girls who had never particularly attracted him. In a manner, these attracted him even less. But he got into a fight over one of them and won the fight, and she wasn't worth it. Few women were, who could be had by fighting, or by bargaining either. You went ashore, and had a chance to stretch your legs and get clean and sleep in a bed that looked all right, whatever it proved by morning, and what did you do? You spent the money you had sweated to come by, and one waterfront was very like another. Ships, however, differed.

That first one was a lousy choice, in the literal as well as in the more modern interpretation of the word. In one port, Liverpool, Martin kept sober and lied his way into a berth as assistant-engineer on a vessel big enough to rate an assistant. It was a freighter bound for Lisbon with a load of lumber.

He got away with it, too, by bluffing partly, and partly, he supposed, by natural aptitude. Machinery was something you took to, or you didn't. And he was learning to handle men. They didn't know how young he was. At eighteen he was

a man himself. At nineteen he found he could grow a beard, and that helped. He could swear neatly in any of the Teutonic tongues, and he'd picked up quite a number of pithy expressions from the Yankee. The food was better on this ship, the quarters were better. It was altogether cleaner. And the learning process went on. The Chief here had a vile temper, which was one reason he couldn't get experienced help. Once, for disobeying orders, he nearly murdered Martin.

Martin didn't recall the onset of the quarrel, but it reached a point beyond speech, and there was the man with a length of iron piping in his gnarled fist, and Martin holding him by his two arm-pits, raising him right off the boiler room floor as easily as you might grasp a snarling cat. The fist relaxed. The pipe fell with a clatter. They were better friends after that.

"What are you going to do with the strength you've got?" the Chief asked.

He had now only the memory—largely incomplete—of what he'd done. But you needed strength if you were to be driven by power, and be blown by that pressure to the surface. Yes, he had the memory of fighting and reveling, and strange ports and strange faces, sights and sounds and smells, and being thirsty and quenching his thirst, and wanting women and having them. Many of the people who since had known him would have been surprised at the places he'd been and the things he'd seen, and at what he'd done, too.

The generation that seemed to be running things now regarded age as automatically barring you from any degree of what they called sophistication. Many of them made a sort of business of pleasure—there had been a name in Martin's day for people who did that—and accepted as wholly their own particular discovery enticements and facts which had doubtless been present when Jason and the Argonauts were racketing around the wharves. Here, in the great city of

New York, there were slightly dehydrated versions of everything, from dancing to food, and Martin was considered fortunate because he could afford the best. He hadn't been able to afford very much back in 1885. But money wasn't everything, if you went with the right crowd and could shout loud enough. He was never one to trail along and sit in a corner and pass unnoticed. He might have only a few marks in his pocket, or shillings or pesos or whatever the coinage might be, and he'd get the best the place could offer just the same. Particularly as he didn't care much—not really. The vastness of his enthusiasm was misleading. It was a casual kind of warmth, the kind engendered by six foot odd of bone and brawn, with the good rich blood of youth coursing through.

He hadn't forgotten the metal works. But he was learning all the time. He could learn still more on a better ship with modern engines. He might not be able to get a berth as right-hand man of the Chief, but that didn't matter. He was lucky all this happened back when it did, and not now when such things were hedged about with laws and merchant shipping acts, and you couldn't sign up without an engineer's certificate. He bluffed it again, and signed articles as engineer of the second class on a passenger ship up from Naples. The Chief was taken sick two days out, and the Chief's mate broke a leg. So Martin—with the assistance of the Captain—ran the ship through the Straits of Gibraltar, and on up the coast of Spain and France, and docked neatly at Rotterdam.

But he'd been cruising about the eastern hemisphere long enough. He thought he'd like to go to America. Not to stay—just to see. He didn't have to bluff much now to get on a ship that would take him there. This was a good modern vessel of the twin-screw type. There was a first and a second cabin and a steerage. He was taking a turn on the second cabin deck one afternoon when he was off duty, his hands in the pockets of his jacket, his service cap at a jaunty angle, when he heard his name:

"Martin—"

No one called him Martin. He hadn't used his right name since he'd gone to sea. He stopped, dead in his tracks. The man who'd accosted him in that unfamiliar—or familiar—way came abreast. He was a tall fellow, almost as tall as Martin was, but of much slighter build. He appeared to be smiling, and yet you could see he wasn't smiling, not really—not at all. Axel Christiansen hadn't changed nearly as much as Martin had himself. And yet there must have been in Martin something unchanged, for Axel to have known him.

"I thought you were dead."

"I'm not."

"That's plain enough." Axel looked him up and down. There was no pleasure in the look, no warmth of greeting. Martin felt that he was being judged. He hadn't thought about judgment in a long time. "You seem to have done pretty well for yourself," his cousin went on. He was evidently impressed by stripes on a sleeve.

"And what are you doing?" asked Martin.

"Going to America. I told you once—don't you remember?"

"I remember."

Their memories, held in common, softened their meeting just a little.

"You better tell me about yourself," Axel said.

"Yes. I suppose there will be a lot of people wanting to know."

"Not as many as you think."

"What do you mean?"

"Your mother—"

"How is she?"

"She went to your brother Karl's farm, and then she came to us. But she was never the same. I might as well tell you. She died."

Martin had turned to the rail. He would never forget standing there and looking down into the water. He stood

so for some time, and then he looked up. "I suppose you hoped that I had died, too," he said.

"No."

"I intended to write. But what could there be to say?"

"Nothing, now. It might be different if your mother were still there to receive your letter."

"Yes," said Martin, "she was the one."

"She was the one," Axel agreed. "Outside of her—and me, perhaps—you were always unmindful of your kin."

"I was not thought to be so," Martin put in.

"I am not talking of what you were thought to be, but of what you were—what you are. I knew you better than they did."

In order that Axel should know him better yet, possibly, Martin recited the whole story of what had happened at the inn, and Axel believed it more readily than Martin himself ever had.

"You always had that about you," Axel said.

"What about me?"

"You know how it is in our old folk-myths? Odin—Thor—Tir—they could do anything. One feels with you something of that."

"Nonsense!" Talking so had its element of sacrilege.

"It is not nonsense. I find myself even able to forgive you a little." Axel smiled then—really smiled.

"Perhaps you think I should go back," Martin ventured.

"How could you? You'd be grabbed up for the army."

"How did you get off?"

"Oh, I served a term. I got myself discharged. I'm not very strong, you know. Then I was a little clever about it, too. You see, I have to get things by being clever—not by just being, the way you can."

Martin didn't always understand what Axel said, but he remembered it, and was aware, from the way his cousin had fallen into talking, that he was forgiving him more and more,

moment by moment. It was a forgiveness which had nothing to do with the stripes on Martin's sleeve. Axel could decide to ignore those, as he always in a measure ignored Martin's success in life. Axel wasn't like most of the world, who could always forgive you anything you did, if your success were great enough. Even this kin of Martin's, of whom he had been in his heart unmindful, was like that. The end justified the means.

Martin, in his old age, thinking about all these matters, didn't wholly agree with such a view. It would have to be a very splendid end. You used, naturally, any means that came to hand, but you didn't expect to be excused or justified. You didn't go about as a spaniel might, who has misbehaved, cringingly hoping to escape punishment. Martin had raped a woman, or at the time thought he had. This was unimportant. And he had brought his mother in sorrow to her grave. He had killed her as surely as though he had run a sword through her breast. That was horrible. But there was nothing to be done about it now. Even Axel—and talks with Axel filled whatever time Martin could spare from duty and sleep—even Axel agreed that no good could be served by any attempt at atonement. It was something for which there was no atonement.

These things Martin had done, unimportant or horrible, were not means he had used for progress. They were accidents, and the change they wrought in him just happened so. If the change were for the better, it was simply that he'd made the best of the circumstances in which he, by chance, found himself. The circumstances suited him. It was why he said, no, to Axel's suggestion that he leave the ship when they reached New York, and not return. He wasn't ready for that yet.

Axel had a job promised him. When he'd served in the army he'd got to know a fellow whose uncle was in New York

had evidently impressed himself on his companion-at-arms. Communications with the merchant had been set afoot, and now work was promised. There would be work enough for two, Axel was sure.

"What kind of importing?" Martin wanted to know.

"Pickles, butter, cheese, dried fish, cans of this and that. Canning fish, particularly in Norway, is getting to be a big thing. The exports last year . . . well, I have the figures in my bag, and they'd surprise you."

"And what will your part be in this great project? Will you help with the unloading?"

"By no means! I shall work as a clerk in the warehouse this man has."

"No, Axel, that is not work for me. Besides, I am not through here. When I am, I shall know it, and will walk off the ship and not return. Meanwhile, you might find out where the big metal works are, for that will be where I shall go."

There were many passengers on board who were going to America to make their fortunes. The steerage was packed with them, and the second cabin, too. Axel at least had work promised, and had troubled to learn some English. He would do clerk's work, sitting on a high stool, no doubt, making notations in a ledger—so many pounds of cheese and butter, so many cans of fish, so many kegs of this and that, at a price. These other men would work only with their hands, just as Martin had at first. But they would go on working so, for as long as their hands held strength. There were Poles, who had taken ship at Rotterdam, and Lithuanians and Slavs. Martin had his first view of labor in the mass—raw labor, cheap labor, cheaper than machines. That interested him, though not in quite the same way that it interested Axel, who persisted in seeing this raw labor, not in the mass, but singly.

"What good are they singly?" Martin asked.

"They managed where they came from. And now they

uproot themselves. They are very brave, but they do not understand."

Martin had no answer to that then. But, since then, he had come to the realization that a great deal of bravery is for lack of understanding. Why had Axel, for all his cleverness, never been brave? Because he understood too much. Even at twenty-one, he was proceeding cautiously, with work promised him and studies behind him. Yet as a child he had led Martin to many an adventure. He had a fire about him. He always had that. But it was a fire of the spirit, not of the flesh.

"Those men will be useful where they're going," Martin had said.

"Useful to whom?"

"Oh, I don't know . . ."

There had always been things you didn't tell Axel. Because, standing with his cousin on that second cabin deck and looking down to the steerage below, Martin's faith in himself suddenly stretched out beyond all reasonable bounds. Here he was, and down there were his henchmen, his thralls, ready for his bidding. He could handle men—he'd proved it in the engine room—so, when he landed in America, as he would in his own good time, he was glad to see that there would be plenty of men to handle. His truthful reply to Axel's question could have been quite specific. These men would be very useful to Martin himself—or, if not these individual men, others like them. But Axel might have laughed at him if he'd told him that.

"They're not oxen," Axel said.

Martin looked at the hordes of children, and the women. "Manifestly not."

"I didn't mean they aren't oxen because their masculine functions are complete."

Many people whom Martin came to know in later years

accused men like Axel of making all the trouble and all the difficulties which grew up with labor unions and labor laws and communism. Martin didn't agree with Axel. He never had. Axel persisted in regarding this massed humanity as individuals, which in a sense they were, but it was as individuals that they were most harmless. The trouble which had arisen was because of their power in the mass. It was men like Martin, and these others who objected to Axel's ideas, who had found this raw labor so useful—in the mass—that they had kept it that way. And the mass was never harmless. Why, it was men like Martin who had taught it to function, not men like Axel, for all Axel's sympathy. Martin understood labor. He knew what it was to work with his hands, sweat four hours straight feeding coal, with the floor at a forty-five-degree angle beneath him, and slimy with grease. How did Axel think he'd won his sleeve stripes? By sitting on a high stool and adding two and two?

These Hunkies on the deck below were free to rise—if they could. Some of them would. Bringing himself sharply to the present, Martin didn't doubt but that some of them had. And more credit to them! The distance was greater for them than it had been for Martin, who had come of good peasant stock, been to a good school, had possessed, when he'd started to shift for himself, a background crowded with advantages.

The Hunkies herded to the rail and gazed at New York as though they were gazing at the heavenly gates. New York wasn't worthy of quite that respect in those days. But Martin hardly had the chance to judge this, coming up the bay, the view afforded by the engine room leaving a good deal to be desired.

The harbor seemed more like a dozen than one, and they were constantly stopping in order to be boarded by officials of varying functions. The skyline, as it came into being later,

didn't exist then. That was one thing Martin didn't guess, that he himself would have a part in the making of that skyline. At any rate, he wasn't as overcome as he should have been. He managed to say farewell to Axel, and get an address where the two would meet. He didn't have shore leave till the next day. He didn't particularly want it. There was no hurry about this first glance at the land he had chosen. The place would keep. He sat that evening in the quarters provided for the petty officers, and wrote a letter to his brother, Karl. The purser changed some money he had for Danish notes, and he sent these, "to pay," he wrote, "for a fine headstone you may not yet have for our mother's grave. Axel told me, and I feel badly. I blame myself."

The letter was brown with age now, and you had to peer closely at the faded ink. But the printed flags of the Line were still bright. Letters weren't meant to last so long, Martin thought. Karl had kept all his letters. Quite a little packet of them had been sent over from Denmark. This one seemed to Martin, looking at it, to mark the end of an era. He had remembered this and he had remembered that, and he had strung it all together in his mind, as old people and children sometimes string beads on a string, just to be occupied. But here was fact, staring at him, out of the past. Here was Martin Lyndendaal as a young man.

"—the headstone you may not yet have—Axel told me, and I feel badly. I blame myself."

Was he blaming himself for the stone's lack, or for his mother's death? He didn't say.

"When I am done with ships," the letter ran on, "I shall settle here in the United States. I can do better here than in the old country. I am not suited to being a farmer. Axel tells me that you all thought me dead. No, nothing like that, as you can see from the little photograph I am enclosing. I had it taken in Liverpool a few months ago. You do not remember me so, of course. The beard you see is

light brown. I wear it, that I may be thought older than I am."

As if there were not enough of fact in the letter without this little shiny photograph—still shiny and stiffly mounted on heavy beveled cardboard! The beard full, the shoulders straining the ill-fitting coat, the thick short throat—the kind of throat to present a problem to the hangman—and the eyes, rather small in the wide face, and far too bold. The jaw showed, even beneath the beard. It was the type of jaw which, beginning somewhere back of the ears, is deceptive in its stretch.

"I have worked mostly on cargo ships. This one has a cargo of men. I thought they were coming here to find work as they could, armed with nothing but their hopes, but I learn that there are many big companies in the United States who make a business of bringing over men, paying their passage money and signing contracts for their labor. The government here, for some reason, does not like this. A law has been lately passed, forbidding it, and many other laws about what they call immigration are coming into effect soon. There is trouble enforcing such laws. This same ship brings another load of men on the next voyage. All this interests me a great deal. It may not interest you, but Axel said I should write to you. You cannot write to me, as I have no place to give you yet where a letter would reach me. There is another Dutch vessel at a wharf nearby. She is bound soon, I hear, for South America—Paramaribo in Dutch Guiana. They are loading her with cotton and other trade goods, and figure to return to Rotterdam with a cargo of coffee and sugar. There is a berth vacant—Chief Engineer. I could fill it—why not? I shall have a talk with the Master to-morrow. Compared to this one, the ship is nothing, but I wish to see the world before I settle—then that will be done. My greetings to the wife Axel says you have taken. I will send her a wedding gift—something odd she could not buy,

even in Copenhagen. My greetings, too, to Peter, and my uncle and my aunts, should you see them. Tell them I have done well for myself and shall do better."

Yes, tell them that, Karl, by all means. Tell them the black sheep is no longer black, but is on his way to take all the prizes at the stock fair. Looking at the photograph now, and reading the letter, Martin decided he was not the kind of young man, still, for all his changed color, whom you would care to meet on a lonely road, particularly if you had a watch, and he had need of one. But to meet him on fairer ground might be very pleasant, uncouth as he was, and avid for what he desired. He could be easy-going, when he had the time to be. And when the peasant straw and the engine room grease gave way—as they would—to gentler gildings, here was a young man who would make use of the grand gesture, the gold coin tossed to the beggar, the dollar left upon the bar. He had used it then, had he not—stripping himself nearly clean to send money for his mother's headstone?

"I wish to see the world before I settle—" So he had written to his brother, and so he had—half a century later—recounted to his publisher. There was a flicker of grandeur in the mere statement. But what would he see of the world in tropic harbors? Little enough, save tramp ships and pot-bellied natives and a fringe of jungle growth. A berth as Chief open—there lay the answer. For he must file his abilities to razor-edge—test himself again and again. In the country towards which he had set his face there would be no time for such testing.

6

Benison was clever—or would have been, if he hadn't had something synthetic about him, like the adulterants used in cheap foods. There were a lot of young men like that in the

world to-day. Benison was rather a superior specimen of the breed. He at least knew what he could do and what he couldn't, and was competent at the trade he had troubled to learn. But, having learned it, why didn't he write something of his own—not merely put into proper words what other people had thought and done? That was what was wrong with him. He had very little which was really his own to contribute. All his thoughts and all his acts were second hand. He had an artificial quality, both of mind and of spirit. It was as if he had been hatched out of an egg or conceived in a test tube, had never lived in a warm soft womb, made his blood-spattered way out into the world, breathed air and discovered sound.

It really wasn't fair to Benison to take his time, as Martin did, when Martin had less and less intention of providing him with material for a biography. The whole scheme was more and more a bluff on Martin's part. There were moments when he almost bluffed himself into believing that this book was really going to be written. He'd make it up to Benison in some way or other for the time the young man persisted in wasting.

"Other men have written books about themselves," Benison told him. "Look at Andrew Carnegie—he wrote several."

"He also gave away three hundred and fifty million dollars."

"Extraordinarily generous, wasn't it? And it wasn't at a time when taxes were so exorbitant that you could really save money by giving it away."

"No, it wasn't."

"Are you one of Mr. Carnegie's admirers?" Benison prodded. He was always trying to get out of Martin his opinion of various well known figures.

"One of his admirers? Yes—and no. He had a religious streak I never cared for—though I don't mind religion, in its place." That was a statement, Martin realized, that would need explaining, but he refused to commit himself further.

After all, Andrew Carnegie was dead, and he'd been a great man.

"You knew him, didn't you?"

"Of course I knew him. I remember him very well. A cute little fellow with a very pleasant smile. And popular with the men, mostly."

"I should think he would have been. Giving away three hundred and fifty million dollars . . ." This beneficence seemed to impress Benison a great deal.

"Well," said Martin, "what could one man do with such a sum, unless he did give it away? How could he spend it? How could the handful of people to whom he might leave it, spend it? He would have been a fool not to have given it away. And a fool was one thing Andy wasn't."

"I heard somewhere that you started as a puddler in one of his mills."

"No, Benison, you heard wrong. When I went to Pittsburgh I was twenty-two years old, and I knew too much to hire myself out as a puddler at \$12.00 a week—and a seventy-two-hour week, at that. There was a little Welshman, Captain Bill Jones, who thought fairly highly of me. He gave me my first job in the mills. He gave me other better jobs. I worked for the Carnegie interests for several years. From 1888 to 1893, I guess it was—it was till after the Homestead strike, I know."

"It must have been tough going, Mr. Lyndendaal."

"I suppose so. The weak ones were weeded out. The average—well—they were weeded out, too, in a way. But the men who were in any sense above the average found an opportunity they would never have found elsewhere."

Why should Benison and the general public want to know all this? Of what possible interest could it be to them? They wanted a success story. Had Martin been so extraordinarily successful? Why, he wasn't even rich, compared with Carnegie and Rockefeller and Ford and men like

that. He hadn't three hundred and fifty millions to give away.

It had been said of the Carnegie mills that there was a scrap heap there for men as well as for iron. True, he'd never been on the scrap heap. He hadn't been weeded out. He'd done pretty well for himself. At one time in his career he had been offered, and refused, a salary of a million dollars a year. In this refusal, possibly his judgment of himself had been better than the judgment of the men who'd wanted him. Besides, he'd had his own interests to consider. He wasn't one to give these up—to sell out, as so many men did, without a look back. Even now, when he himself was inactive, his firm went on. His own organization was still a going concern, under his name, officially. A name was better than being rich, a name like MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, that stood for something. When you made so much money you had to give it away it ceased to have any meaning. It became like the matches children use as chips for games. The winner gets all the matches, and then they divide them up again and begin at the beginning.

Foundations were a fine thing, the furthering of human knowledge, the prevention of disease, charity on a scale, books available everywhere. But if you began giving things away like that, where were you going to stop? As for old Carnegie, Martin wasn't one of the men who had hated Carnegie—he'd had nothing to hate him for, personally—but he'd always held to the theory that Carnegie was scared. After all, the Scotchman was a very religious man, and a number of people had told him he was going to hell. He'd found himself with all this money—accumulating more of it all the time—and he had to get rid of it somehow! So he draped a whole philosophy about the thing and wrote books about it and made speeches. Didn't like drinking. Didn't like swearing. Strictly moral. And his money piling up.

Because Martin hadn't come to Pittsburgh until 1888,

Carnegie always regarded him a little as an outsider. In 1888, many of the mills owned by Carnegie had been in operation for some years. It might have been better in some ways if Martin had landed in America at sixteen, and let the years at sea go. That would have given him a six years' start. He sometimes pondered this. But in reviewing the course of action taken, you know the disadvantages, which you don't know in the case of the course discarded. He arrived at the mills a man, with experience behind him, his abilities at razor-edge. He possessed the talking point of a berth as Chief and was fully weaned in an arena which was good grounding for what he found. His mistakes had been made cheaply—and anonymously. So perhaps those six years were not the loss they might have appeared, and—if he were regarded as an outsider—it was a regard he didn't mind.

At sea he had started as the lowliest of the low. In Pittsburgh he started with a certain mantle of command about him. He was given a fair job at once by Captain Jones, and rose. He made good money, almost from the start, sharing in bonuses, living cheap—which was as it should be because all his conscious living went on in the mills.

He remembered the smith's forge in Odense. This was a forge such as the smith had never conceived. This was metal on a scale. To Martin—to Martin now as well as then—a steel mill was the most beautiful place in the world. There was no delicate structure of architecture, no mountain view, no ocean, not even any live creature, that had the same power to stir him. Not just from beauty. And after hours of grueling and exacting labor the beauty would still hold. Even outside, where all the ground, and the sky also, was filled with soot, and there were jagged gashes in the hills, and the houses where the mill hands lived were mean and poor, the mills spread out for the sight. They were making steel there, and steel was man's triumph over God. It was better than the iron ore which had been brought from God's earth. It was

strong and beautiful in all its processes and all its uses. Its shelters, spread out there like rows of sheds for the wagons of giants, could not dare to be too fine, because the steel must break through whenever it willed, belching fire and smoke and filling the night sky with the reflection of its greatness.

Martin looked back on these years of his life as any man must, on a time when his own special powers first find scope. It was for him a period singularly devoid of struggle, considering its nature. "Tough going," Benison had called it. Martin had delighted in the toughness. The weak were weeded out. He found himself one of a group of exceptional men. Some of them used the lovely metal merely to gain money, as a pawn in a vast game of chess in which every move predetermined a shift of fortune. To others, like himself, the money was secondary. If it had been in gold coins, now . . . But it wasn't. It was in notes and bank drafts—credits—bonds—the pen-scratch of a name on an expensively milled oblong of paper. And all these—or most of them—stood for sums which had nothing at all to do with the ordinary payments to be received or made. The week's wages for a good workman, the paymaster's disbursement aboard ship, the savings in the carved wooden box under the bed in his aunt's house—any one of these represented a natural denomination which could be spent or kept. But money, as it could be, and was, made in those early Pittsburgh years by an exceptional man such as himself, was purely fabulous to him. Money ceased to be money, not only when—like Carnegie—you made so much of it you had to give it away, but when, by any sum, it exceeded your habit of spending or keeping.

In later years Martin's habit of spending increased. That Rembrandt there had cost a pretty penny, and this great house, and everything contained therein, and what it still cost to keep it going—though this wasn't nearly as much as it had been at one time, when it had been going at full blast. But he never had the slight sinking of the stomach so many

rich men experience whenever they sign a check. Expenditures, if they were large enough, weren't completely real. Three hundred and fifty million dollars. He had treated mention of such bounty in rather cavalier fashion, Benison had obviously thought. The sum had no more meaning for Martin than the number of miles between the stars. This attitude of his, which he had never troubled to explain, would have cleared up much of the conduct of his life which some who knew him puzzled at.

He remembered when he had received his first bonus at the mills. He hadn't been there very long, but he was what was called a tonnage man—he was paid according to the weight of steel he and his crew turned out. In two weeks he made three hundred dollars. It was far more than he had ever made in any such time.

"What will you do with it, Squarehead?" the paymaster asked, shoving the envelope at him through the barred window.

Squarehead meant Swede. "I'm a Dane, and I'll thank you to call me nothing else," answered Martin, in his strongly accented but oddly fluent English. He signed his name with a flourish.

Three hundred dollars was still within the limits of reality. He put two hundred and eighty of it in the bank. The remaining twenty was more than enough for his room and board, and anything else he might want. He boarded with a German woman whose husband had been killed the year before. She was a neat housekeeper, doing as well as anyone could with the soot, and he liked her cooking. Her house was convenient to the mills. His staying on there for as long as he did, when he could have afforded accommodations more luxurious, gave rise to gossip which might so easily have been true, but didn't happen to be. There was always that about Martin which gossip followed. If he'd had relations with all the women he'd been accused of having them with during his

long life, he would never have become the man he was in the structural steel business. He didn't care what people said—that was the trouble. He would do things that invited comment, just because he wanted to do them.

He gave his landlady a fine fur coat for Christmas. He wanted to give her something nice. She'd been very nice to him. But not as nice as people thought she had—not when they saw the coat. Was there something about giving a woman a fur coat, that you couldn't rightly do it unless you were sleeping with her?

She knew how people would regard the gift, as soon as she opened the box. "Oh, Mr. Martin, it is lovely, but I should not be taking it! People will think things!"

"I shall be proud to have them think anything they wish," said Martin, gallantly.

The woman was older than Martin was, and not bad-looking. In the coat, she looked quite fine. If he'd married her, as at moments he had considered doing, his whole life would have been different. She was a decent, self-respecting woman. She would have made him a good wife. But, if he'd married her, he would have grown old right in the mills. He would have risen to be a mill superintendent, and lived in the red brick mansion with the sloping green-black lawn, right here, in Braddock—the house owned by the Company and dedicated to the occupancy of mill superintendents. It was close by—so close, the saying went, that the blows from the furnaces made house heat unnecessary. And if anything went wrong you could get into your trousers as quickly as a fireman, and be over there. It would have been a good life, a happy life, a successful life. And the smell of the hot metal forever in your nostrils . . .

All this if Martin had married the German woman. Plenty of scope for most of his peculiar talents. Plenty of men to judge and handle. Plenty of machinery. And as for his energy—well—being a mill superintendent was no job for sluggards.

It might so easily have happened just like this, if Martin had had it in him ever to be content, to be satisfied wholly with what he had, once the first freshness had worn, and he'd taken what he could. But he didn't have it in him, and he must have known this about himself, even then. Even while he was so happy in work which stilled the temper of his restlessness, he could not tie himself, nor feel at any place but the beginning of where he must go.

Squarehead, he had been called. He wasn't a square-head because he wasn't a Swede, but the truth of the calling was unaffected by frontier lines. These exceptional men who, like himself, were rising—some of them had risen—were older than he was, and they had a kind of worldly experience which he lacked. He'd thought so highly of the sights he'd seen and the knots he'd covered. But a stokehole wasn't high, nor an engine room much higher. And a little inn at Odense, and two farms—what were they? He could be called *squarehead*. These exceptional men—and he knew himself for one of them, even before they were aware of the kinship—had been unimpeded by class distinctions. That was by grace of the new country. Some of them had been born in it—free and equal—and those who hadn't, had come very young. Apart from that, most of them hadn't started life any better than Martin had—if as well. But there was a gloss now over their humble beginnings, a sort of patina of success. If you couldn't acquire it, you were held back.

They covered the knots, too—or the miles. But not in stokeholes. They went where they went in fine trains, with negroes in white coats to serve them. They were welcome guests at fine hotels with marble façades, and palm trees in the lobbies and private bathrooms to every room. They smoked cigars imported from Havana. They owned blooded horses. Some of them lived right in Pittsburgh, and drove out the ten miles every morning, and back at night. They wore rough clothes about the works, but not because they

didn't have good ones. Martin heard of a dinner in Pittsburgh where all the men wore dress suits. In Denmark such adjustments weren't asked of you. You were held by your birth within the limitations you could compass. In this seething country, anything was possible.

7

Some weeks, Martin had worked at night, but it was during his second year that his friend, Captain Jones, gave him a job as assistant night-superintendent, so he had all his days free. He had to get his sleep, but too much sleep was bad for a man. The free days gave him a chance to go into Pittsburgh and see what he could see. He had money now, and he figured he might as well get some benefit from it. He'd start with clothes. What use he would have for such clothes was another matter. But he wished to possess them. There were good tailors in Pittsburgh. He made it his business to learn who was considered the best, and he ordered some suits.

He missed Axel. Axel would know about such things. Just why Axel, sitting on his warehouse stool, would be of help, Martin couldn't have said, except that there was in him that peculiar fluid quality capable of change. It would be so easy for Axel to turn himself into a gentleman. He was nearly a gentleman without the turning. If Martin had had Axel with him when he went to be measured at that expensive tailor's, it wouldn't have been—as it was—one of the hardest mornings he had ever spent. For the first time he doubted himself—had sight of the hurdle he must jump. What was he but a workman? What could he ever be? He thought the tailor was secretly laughing at him, and at the Sunday best he wore. Well, the heavy black was a bit hot for a Pittsburgh summer, and the coat was too tight. It was

stretched at the seams. The new clothes wouldn't do that, he hoped.

"Indeed not, sir," said the tailor, busy with his tape measure. The man didn't laugh at what he had to measure. "You have broad shoulders—you'll need no padding."

Martin didn't know what padding was, when it came to shoulders, but he didn't ask. Bolts of cloth were brought out for his inspection. How could he tell what cloth would look like in a suit? He had a flash of genius.

"On shipboard, I always wore blue," he told the tailor. And then something he didn't have to tell—"I think I'll feel easier in blue."

"An excellent choice. I would suggest a double-breasted model. It's the latest thing."

Why shouldn't Martin have the latest thing? He was paying enough for it. And no sleeve stripes, either. He must come back Thursday for a fitting. Or was it Thursday? He wasn't sure the day of the week it had been, but he knew he didn't come back then, because the day specified was taken up with the funeral of Captain Jones.

The contents of one of the furnaces had jammed. Jones, with a gang of men, sought to break the wall bridge which deflects the flame. It gave way and the molten ore crashed through. Jones, in getting back, struck his head. He never regained consciousness. In honor of his funeral the works at Braddock were closed.

The funeral, and going to the grave, didn't take the whole day. Martin could have had his suits fitted after that. But he was of no mood to do so. He had called Jones his friend, though he hadn't known him on any intimate basis—hadn't been close to him, as he was close to Axel or his mother, or even as he had grown to be close to the bad tempered Chief on the ship. But in his death he experienced a personal loss. In later years, in talking with other men who had worked with the captain, he found they felt this same loss. It was as

if they all owed to the little Welshman something of their success in life. And yet these other men, including Martin, had risen as Jones had never risen, had always refused to rise. There were stories about that. He had turned down offers of partnerships and percentages and a voice in the business management of the Carnegie interests. He remained a workman to the end, and died a workman's death. He would have felt just as foolish as Martin did, going to a fine tailor in Pittsburgh. Had he been a young man in Martin's place, he would probably have married the German woman and been content. Why, Martin couldn't even remember her name now!

He didn't feel as easy in his new blue suits as he'd expected to feel. They were of an exceptionally fine cloth. And he could see, looking at himself in the biggest mirror the house afforded, that he was a fine figure of a man. But you didn't change your appearance overnight, just because you had changed your clothes. He looked dressed up and awkward and foreign. He would have to become accustomed to wearing such clothes, so he could forget he had them on. And what time had he for that, working twelve hours every night, and not even Sundays always free? He'd manage somehow.

The stiff collars he'd bought bothered him a little, and his new necktie, gorgeous as it was, didn't seem right. He might not know just how to tie it. He had no beard now. He wondered if shaving it off had been a mistake. He looked unexpectedly young. But that was all right. He was in a position now to drop the years the beard had added. He must get also, he could see, a different kind of haircut. He wanted to look American, as if he'd been in Pittsburgh for a long time. The boy steel master, he fancied himself, and he was doing well enough to indulge his fancies.

He had the title of Assistant-Engineer, and Assistant Night-Superintendent, at the Edgar Thomson Works. It

had taken over a year to reach that point—too much time. His experience in engine rooms and stokeholes should have been worth more. There was a man he'd heard a good deal about who'd done it in six months, with no experience whatever. Rosch, the name was. With Rosch that had been only the beginning. Now Rosch was superintendent at the big Homestead Works. Captain Jones had given him his first job, and, now that the captain was dead, there was some talk of Rosch's coming back to Braddock as superintendent there. Martin had been Jones's man. Rosch might want his own men. Oh, well, you could worry about that when it happened! Martin and Rosch had one thing in common, anyway. They went to the same tailor. Martin wanted to know Rosch, and all these exceptional men—be openly recognized as one of them. If he were doing well enough to indulge his fancies, he was doing well enough for that, too.

He returned to his own room. The mirror there was totally inadequate, showing him only his face, framed as it was in the new stiff collar. He'd ordered two suits. They were very much alike. He took the other one out of its box, and draped the two of them on the wooden triangles the tailor had given him for the purpose. His old clothes hung in a makeshift closet, formed by a red cretonne curtain and a three-cornered shelf. He made room among them for the new, which were important beyond any reasonable explanation.

Martin was not ordinarily given to gazing at himself in mirrors, worrying about the set of a necktie. Most men, watching him, would think his solicitude because he had a girl to please. He would have thought so himself, if he hadn't known better.

Clothes had never been Martin's hobby. He had bought hundreds of suits in his time, and he didn't remember any of them. But these two blue suits, made in what must have been the summer of 1889, were as clear to his sight, still, as

though Eric had this moment brought them forth from his ample supply and laid them out for his consideration. But Eric wouldn't do that now, even if they had been in existence. Martin hadn't worn suits much lately. His women-folk were always presenting him with the most extraordinary lounging garments. His daughter, Fanny, had sent him from Hollywood a creation embroidered with gold dragons. His daughter Sarah's taste ran to wine colored brocade, and Martha liked camel's hair. Fifty years, it was, since he'd had those suits. They'd served him well—those and others like them. And it didn't matter any more, what he wore, as long as it was comfortable and easy to be helped in and out of, and pleased the givers.

He tried to think back and remember what he'd done that day after he had tried on the blue suit. He might have slept. And slept the next day, too. It would have been the day following the next that he let sleep go, and took the train into Pittsburgh. The Monongahela House had a barber shop right off the lobby. A different haircut did improve his appearance. Next door there was a hat store, and, beyond that, a shoe store. What with the new hat and shoes and haircut, he could forget about the suit a little. His great adventure was having lunch in the main restaurant. That was another thing he must get the hang of, eating in such places, learning what to order and what fork went with what. You couldn't go into a place like that and shout for service as you could in a waterfront resort. You had to be quiet. There was music playing in a balcony, very soft and unobtrusive.

It was hard for Martin to remember now what had impressed him most about the place. He had been there so many times since, that any first impression had worn thin. He knew he didn't particularly enjoy his meal. He hadn't expected to enjoy it. But it was interesting, sitting there and watching the people. At a table near by, there were a

group of men he'd seen at the mills. They evidently recognized him. Something was being said about him—he could see that. They probably wondered what he was doing in such a fine place as the Monongahela. The truth would never have occurred to them, that he was doing practically nothing.

He had a sort of hunch about dropping in there and having lunch. Let them wonder what he was doing! Particularly now that he wasn't so sure of his status in the mills, it might be as well to establish a status outside them. He wanted to see, and to be seen. These men undoubtedly knew more than he did—in some ways. In the past, Martin had had charge of plenty of men who'd known more than he did. These men might be harder to outguess than the men he was used to handling, but Martin wasn't looking for an easy way to get along. He formed the habit of having lunch at the big hotel twice a week. There were always men at the table near by—usually the same ones. It might not get him anything, but it might. The thing it got him was a nod, now and then. And one day the mighty Carnegie himself was present, and asked him to join them. Carnegie knew who Martin was—knew his full name and what he did at the mills and that Jones had liked him.

"Jones told me—God bless his name—that you know a good deal about furnaces."

"I should, sir—I've had to do with some pretty bad ones. Boilers, they call them, where I used to work."

"Where was that?"

"Aboard ship."

"Stokehole?" The brief question came from a man Martin didn't recognize, and he hadn't caught the name. He was a fine looking fellow, almost as big as Martin was. He had very bright eyes that met Martin's with a kind of false innocence.

"That, too," Martin answered. He knew the value of a

pause. "I was Chief on a Dutch cargo vessel—South American trade."

"Weren't you a little young to be Chief?"

"It might well be. I had a beard then."

Carnegie laughed.

"Oh, not like yours, sir. Or yours, either, Mr. Lake." This last denial he addressed to a slim quiet gentleman whose beard was barbered to the last hair.

"What was it like?" the big fellow asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Just a beard to cover my nakedness."

Carnegie laughed again, so the big one laughed, too. The slim quiet gentleman addressed as Lake merely smiled. "It's nobody's business how young you are, if you can do your job," he said.

To be praised by Lake, even indirectly, was a compliment the extent of which Martin was fully aware. Next to the little Scotchman, Lake was the most important man in the steel industry. And he had the reputation of being very sparing of praise—or of speech, for that matter.

"Just what is your age?" Carnegie asked. He was a great one for questions.

"Going on twenty-four, sir."

"I thought that was about right. Rosch here thought you were younger."

So that was Rosch, the big man with the bright eyes. A look passed between him and Martin. They didn't like each other. And Rosch didn't like this admission that Martin had been the subject of discussion.

"I suppose if I were a woman," said Martin, "I'd be flattered!"

Carnegie roared. "That's one on you, Charlie—"

Martin wasn't sure it was wise to have one on Charlie. He wondered if he'd been talking too much. But Carnegie had another question, and he must answer it.

"What nationality are you?"

"I'm Danish, sir."

"They make butter and cheese there, don't they?" said Rosch.

After lunch was over, Martin excused himself. "I must be getting on, to catch a bit of sleep before the night shift."

"Is your business in the city over for the day?" It was Rosch speaking, and it was on the tip of Martin's tongue to say, it was. But that would show his hand. Rosch would know then why he had been having lunch at the hotel so often.

"Nearly over," he said, instead. "I've a bit of business at the broker's."

"What are you buying?"

"I haven't made up my mind."

"Why don't you buy steel?" asked Carnegie.

"Have you any for sale, sir?"

Lake smiled again, and Martin thanked them all for a pleasant time.

In looking back over the course of a life, there were certain milestones that marked progress. This was one of them, this day, this hour, when—with chance working strongly in his favor—Martin had sat at the same table with the three men who could be of more value to him than any other three, and made on them a favorable impression. Rosch didn't like him, but he wouldn't go against him in the face of the other two. Not openly. He wouldn't—as he had a reputation for doing sometimes—pull any fast ones on Martin. Besides, Martin didn't matter enough yet, to have Rosch for an enemy.

He and Charlie Rosch . . . Rosch was a little older than Martin was. He'd been born up the state, of German parents. He'd sold groceries at the local store. He'd worked his way through school, and through some trade school or other. He'd been in Pittsburgh several years when Martin arrived on the scene. When Martin first heard of him, he was pretty

well established—superintendent at Homestead—working like the devil—making money, and spending it, too. He was always what is known as a spender—all his life. It was a wonder he found the time, considering how hard he drove himself. He'd figured out a system for feeding raw material into the works, and moving it along, and getting it finished in the process. Anything that Rosch could do, Martin thought, he himself could do, also—though he might take longer doing it. Rosch had a brain like chain lightning, and he was a great favorite with Carnegie.

Martin admired him, but he felt towards him that peculiar jealousy which springs, unreasoning, in the heart of one man against another. And jealousy was not a vice to which Martin was prone. There were people whose possessions he envied them for having, as he now envied the young their youth and the well their health. Jealousy was such a mean and petty quality. He didn't think himself mean, or petty, whatever else he might be. But it was hard to say what you were or what you weren't. You couldn't tell the whole truth about yourself. Sometimes you couldn't even remember it.

He remembered going back to Braddock with a little pulse of triumph singing in his head, and yet being aware that he mustn't let this triumph pervade him to the point where he couldn't get along as if nothing had happened. Possibly, nothing had. He needed the three hours' sleep he would be able to get. He must work now doubly hard. He had already proved himself to be a good man, but he must prove himself better than good. Men like Carnegie and Lake and Rosch weren't in business for their health, nor did they help a man along the road to fortune just because they liked him. A man must have something they wanted—something to trade with. What Martin had now wasn't enough.

He walked up the hill from the train, thinking of these things. He had power—power over a gang of laborers. But

being able to get more work than anyone else could out of a crew of Hunkies wasn't a talking point in getting ahead. In fact, it was very apt to keep you just where you were. Power—money. . . . He wanted more of both, and not to be a mere cog in the wheels that hummed, and sputtered, and coughed out steady jets and drifts of smoke. From the hill's rise, Martin looked off over that smitten landscape. Too bad he hadn't been alive a couple of hundred years before, and landed in America when the country was undeveloped, and he could have bought it—this part of it, anyway—for a string of Baltic amber. That was nonsense. He didn't want it as it had been then.

He had noted one thing about those men whom he had lain for as a cat does for a mouse. They were different as three men could be, and two of them little more than touched his shoulder, but they all had a certain set to their faces. It might be a certain structure of jaw or eye socket. He had a jaw, too, and now no beard to cover it. He met his landlady in the hall on the way to his room. He mumbled a greeting in passing and she looked at him strangely. It wasn't at his new clothes she was looking. He'd shown her those before. That was the disconcerting point about women—they always seemed to know, and to resent, when a man had thoughts which excluded them wholly.

From the wisdom and the caution that years had brought him, Martin looked back on that period of his life with a feeling akin to horror. He knew now what he'd been up against. If he'd realized it then, his courage would have faltered. For he could have been, at that time, no match for these men against whom he was planning to pit himself. He had his uses, and they were using him. They were paying him well. He could get the work out of any number of men that you cared to place under him, without trouble or friction or error. But as soon as he reared his head above that aptitude, the chances were good that a club would be

waiting to hit it down. The old Martin knew just how good. The young Martin hadn't thought about chances. He was a workman—in spite of his exalted job—and he didn't intend going on as such. He wasn't very clear about what he did intend, but he would take advantage of any opportunity that came his way. It was as if there were a steam generated within him which forced movement.

The talk had been right about Rosch's coming back to Braddock, now that Jones was gone. Though things went on much as they had for a while. Then one night, as Martin was walking along the narrow runway that extended like a balcony along one side of the mill, he heard his name called:

"Say—Lyndendaal—"

He stopped and turned. It was Rosch.

"Yes, sir?"

"I'd like to speak to you."

"I'd like to speak to you, too."

But they couldn't speak there—not above the noise. Mills weren't quiet then, as they had since become. They would have had to shout. There would have been no privacy. Not that they would, of necessity, need privacy for their speaking. But they might.

"My office is down below," Martin suggested.

He called it an office. It was little more than a cubby-hole, giving space to a table of rough pine and a couple of chairs. He kept his records there of the number of heats run through each night. It was on the ground floor, in a corner where it wouldn't interfere with the rolling of the stock.

"We'll go down," said Rosch.

They walked along the runway, side by side, not speaking further. When they came to the stair, Martin waited while Rosch went first. Martin's throat was suddenly dryer than even the heat and dust would warrant. You outguessed people—that's what you had to do—and Rosch himself had a

reputation that way. Why wasn't Axel here, invisible at Martin's elbow, whispering in his ear, agile and clever? Martin was concerned in wishing for this presence more than he was with the more obvious aspects of the situation. So much so that by the time he and Rosch had traversed the distance to the little office, he could almost believe that Axel had heard his plea and come. Support arrived from somewhere, certainly, during the silence, while they sat down, and in the course of the pause following Rosch's repetition of his statement that he wanted to speak to him. Martin's natural question, after that, would have been—"What about?"—which would have given Rosch an opening for anything.

Martin didn't ask this. "I wanted to speak to you, too."

So it was Rosch who asked it—"What about?"

Martin found himself talking and, from word to word, he hardly knew what the next word might be. But the words made sense. "I wanted to ask you if you could put me in the way of getting in over at Homestead."

"You'll have no trouble getting a pass."

"I don't want a pass. I want a job there. Homestead is newer than this place, and you've put in some improvements I'd like to have a look at."

"What made you think your job here was finished?"

"Nothing," said Martin, "nothing at all. My record here is good. It rates me something. A place at Homestead as a shift foreman, anyway."

"Why, that isn't as good as what you're doing!"

"I can decide that."

"So can I. And suppose I decide I want you here?"

"All right, Mr. Rosch, we'll say no more of it. By the way, what was it you wanted to speak to me about?"

"I always like to have a talk with my men."

"So do I," said Martin. "There isn't a stake driver who comes to work here whom I don't pass the time of day with—"

or night. And now—if you'll excuse me—I have to take a look-see." He rose.

"What's a look-see?"

"It's a sailor's expression. One of the first English words I learned, except out of a school book. Means 'look around,' I guess."

The two men stepped out into the open mill. They moved without effort, unhindered by the machines which always seemed to Martin so oddly in control. They walked where a mis-step could mean sudden and horrible death, but they made none. They could see very clearly in the long vistas of twilight and the flares of incandescence. This was the hall of the gods and they were gods in it. Martin admitted that even Rosch was a god there. He didn't like Rosch, but he'd bested him, he'd got what he wanted, and he could afford to be generous. He didn't want to go to Homestead—not yet—but if he hadn't said he did he probably would have been fired. Rosch didn't like him, and he had men of his own he was using in all the other preferred positions. It would be a feather in Martin's cap, not being displaced.

"I learned English when I could talk," said Rosch, "though we always spoke German at home. By the way, did you see your broker the other day?"

"No," said Martin, "I let it pass."

It was hard, being heard in the open mill. Rosch was forced to repeat his question.

"I said I let it pass," Martin almost shouted.

"It's not such a good idea," said Rosch, "getting interested in Wall Street."

"I don't know anything about Wall Street," Martin shouted back. "I've never been there."

"I'll hand you one thing," Rosch answered him.

"What's that?"

"You're the smartest squarehead I've ever known."

It was lucky for Rosch that his assistant night-superintendent lacked the temper for murder. Here in the mill, there were so many opportunities for murder—casual and complete. Rosch and Martin were old men now, and they had got along together for a long time. There was something miraculous about their survival, all things considered. And Martin had forgiven Rosch a great many things, not caring enough about the man to find forgiveness hard, but this one comment he never forgave. And Rosch may have meant it as a compliment, Martin was fully aware.

8

Martin was aware of so many things now. It was difficult, thinking back, not to attach to the past your present estimates—difficult to see it clear and free, as a series of incidents, or pictures, that your memory had kept bright. Or you might recall your past as a straight panorama, a scene moving continuously before the vision. But Martin's mind held no such burden. He couldn't even remember how long he had stayed as assistant night-superintendent at the Edgar Thomson Works.

He lived cheap and he saved his money. Those good suits cost nothing for upkeep. And, in spite of Rosch's opinion of Wall Street, or perhaps because of it, he used his savings in speculation. He was lucky. He doubled his money—he trebled it. He found himself in possession of the sum of ten thousand dollars. That was something to trade with—to get a toe-hold with. To Martin it seemed like a fortune. He soon discovered that it didn't seem like that, but most inconsiderable, to the little group of exceptional men of which he now could count himself quite definitely one. But he didn't risk further speculation.

The immaculate little man named Lake, with the neat

beard, he whom he had met that day at lunch, liked him. Lake was important. He had acquired for the Carnegie interests a small plant that was the last word in steel. They rolled rails by a new and economical process, the steel passing through the furnace but once. Naturally, Lake had to have a first-class organization to run the place. Among others, he picked Martin. He sent for him to come to his office in Pittsburgh, and offered him a job far better than the one he held.

"It sounds good," said Martin, slightly suggesting a doubt.

"What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing—nothing at all."

"No use going on where you are—indefinitely. This is a step up."

"I've been thinking about a step up for some time," said Martin.

"Then this is it," Lake smiled.

It looked like that, Martin thought, sitting here in this fine office, with the mahogany desk and the leather chairs and the sunlight breaking through the smoke. The smoke lay over everything—even here.

As Martin didn't speak, Lake went on. He liked people not to speak, Martin had heard. "Have you been offered something better?"

"In a way."

"I'd like very much to know where."

"It isn't settled yet."

"If you're thinking of allying yourself with interests other than ours, you're making a mistake."

"I'm not—"

Lake cut him off. "Why, with this new open hearth process, I figure we can turn out—well, let's say in ten years—seven hundred and fifty thousand ton of pig and six hundred thousand ton of raw steel, from one plant alone."

"In ten years?"

"Annually, we'll be doing that—annually—in ten years."

"All for rails," said Martin.

"What's wrong with rails?"

"Nothing—nothing at all. But land on Manhattan Island in New York City is getting awful scarce."

"And what has that to do with the subject under discussion?"

"Well, they can't spread their buildings out any more, so they'll have to spread them up. They've started already, and they'll need steel to do it with."

"We make structural steel."

"Not enough. I've got a little money to invest."

"How much?"

"Not enough. I'll need more."

"If you went in business for yourself we'd only squeeze you out."

"Most likely. But, meantime, I'd have learned plenty, and I might be able to trade with you."

"Have you had lunch?" Lake asked.

"No, sir."

"Suppose you come over to my club with me. I'm on a diet, and the food there suits me rather better than what they serve at the hotel."

Martin remembered discussing with Lake the conditions which made a diet necessary, and recommending to him the virtues of sour milk. His cousin, Axel Christiansen, had a delicate stomach, too, and had found it very beneficial.

Looking back upon this and subsequent dealings with Lake, Martin was again acutely conscious of the dangers through which he had so casually passed. He felt very much as a man might feel who had spent several years of his life within the cages of a zoo, and yet had emerged comparatively unscathed. Lake was avaricious and unscrupulous. His enemies were legion. He had a violent temper which—for the

most part—he controlled. Some few superior men reluctantly admired him. All inferior men hated him, not reluctantly. No milk of human kindness flowed through his veins. He was completely cynical—trusted no one—attributed to them his own motives, or branded them fools. All this was true of Jonathan Lake, and yet Lake and Martin were friends—close friends, as the years went on.

It was impossible for Martin to compute the value of that friendship. He could make a guess at understanding it. Lake was always a man frail and delicate. He possessed an engine far too powerful for its housing. Martin had the effect on him of giving him added shelter. Martin was so strong, so healthy, so normal in all physical ways. He was calm. And yet, with that calmness, went an ambition as endless as Lake's was. The two men didn't always agree with each other, either in method or in aim, but they always knew what the other one meant by anything. Lake had a very thorough knowledge of finance, credits, organizing a business with little capital. He was past master of every sort of business trickery, within the law, and—for some reason, obscure to Martin even to this day—he let the younger man in on some of his secrets. Martin accomplished things under Lake's tutelage that he never could have otherwise accomplished. Lake liked him. Outside of his own immediate family, and these were women, Martin may have been the only person whom Lake ever did like.

In checking up his assets, Martin realized that the greatest of these was his ability to get on with people. People were impressed by him. They trusted him. He had a simple, hearty way about him, irresistible alike to banker and pud-dler. To stray dogs and beggars he was a marked man, and the mighty would cancel important conferences for the sake of his presence. Most men who had this quality were otherwise worthless, so it did them no good. It was the one quality which Lake lacked utterly, therefore in Martin he

could use it. Martin didn't consider himself democratic. But people thought he was. No one thought Lake was.

Lake had a house in East Liberty, a suburb of Pittsburgh. It was built of red brick, and the stable was red brick, too. It was set in an estate of several acres, and there was a building called a casino, containing a bowling alley and a billiard room. There was a gardener's cottage and a cottage called a lodge. The lodge was placed near the single entrance which was the only opening in the high brick wall surrounding the place. You rang a bell by the wrought iron gates and a man came out from the lodge and looked at you, and let you in or not according to his judgment and your credentials. It was the kind of place a prince might live in, or a prisoner, or a man who was afraid of his life. And yet it was an odd kind of place—with its vast machinery of hospitality—for a man to have, who didn't like people. Lake wore it, as he wore the flower in his lapel, and when it grew stale for his sight, he sold it for what it would fetch, for junk, and moved to New York. He went on to marble instead of brick, and museums instead of casinos, and armed bodyguards instead of peering lodge-keepers.

But it didn't suggest a temporary shelter, Martin thought. It was the kind of place you inherit from your father and hand down to your children. There was a croquet ground and a tennis court and a playhouse for the little girls—everything complete on a tiny scale—and there was a greenhouse where flowers and vegetables were grown out of season. Lake built it, and Lake sold it. Briefly, for a few years, he lived in it. However, it wasn't for Martin to criticize Lake's way of life.

He had accepted it, and taken from it what he could get. If he had refused it—and Lake's friendship—it was quite possible that he might not be sitting here now in the big velvet covered chair, with Eric to wait on him, and doctors to see that he kept on living. You don't survive the way

Martin had, if you're too particular about what your friends do. Martin wasn't like the little men, who had no chance with Lake, or the dull ones who were sunk by him utterly. Lake regarded the mass of unskilled labor as so much cattle, and didn't treat it as well as the real cattle on the farms in Denmark were treated. But Martin wasn't one of the mass—he never had been—and he wasn't unskilled.

Now, of course, conditions were different. There was a large class of labor which was skilled, intelligent and prosperous. You had to cater to it, to get along. But you didn't give the dull man or the little man any more quarter than you ever had given him. If he'd stay in his place and be useful, all right. If he got in the way, he had to get out of it. And he did get out—just as he had in the past.

Martin was a bit more human than Lake had ever been. Or was it, he sometimes questioned himself, that this humanity of his was an asset—something he found he could trade with? He used it for this purpose, and yet Lake and Martin, and men such as they, were none of them running a charity bazaar. In later life, some of them seemed to think they were. Martin noted that the official biographies of Lake classed him as a philanthropist. Another case of having too much money, and having to give it away. Martin was rather glad, on the whole, that he'd lost so much of his. Just comfortable, he would leave his family—just comfortable. No room for charity on a scale. And as for his family, they were reasonably comfortable without having to wait for him to cash in his final checks.

That house of Lake's in East Liberty continued for Martin the process of self-improvement the possession of the blue suits had begun. He learned to negotiate wide polished floors without tripping or clumping. He learned to drink champagne, and eat caviar, and what to say—and what not to say—in the presence of ladies. He learned when to get up and when to sit down, and to drink coffee out of little

cups that might have been fashioned from egg shells, they were so thin. He got the stains of labor off his hands, and the blurred foreign emphasis from his tongue. He grew accustomed to being waited on by servants without feeling foolish. There were twenty-two servants at the Lakes', indoors and out. At the inn in Odense the staff hadn't been nearly so large. Though the inn was one of the subjects which Martin didn't talk about.

Martin and Mrs. Lake got along together beautifully, right from the start. She was a quiet pleasant woman of about thirty-five, not pretty, but nobody's fool. She was responsible for the entire running of the place, and she did a good job of it. Martin had fancied that rich women led lives of idle luxury, lay on a couch, nibbling at bonbons, spent the afternoon being driven in a fine carriage, and an occasional morning at the dressmaker's. This wasn't in the least the sort of life Mrs. Lake led. Breakfast in the establishment was at seven o'clock—eight on Sundays—and Mrs. Lake was always present. She never retired at night until the last of her woman guests had signified their desire, either for repose or departure. As for the twenty-two servants, she must answer for their every act. She watched Mr. Lake's health, she spent a good deal of time with her children. She was a little worried, she told Martin, about their suitable education. Though why he, young bachelor that he was, should be consulted on such a point, he didn't quite know. The education of children was hardly his concern.

"They have everything," Mrs. Lake told him, "and I don't want them to be spoiled. I want them to be prepared to meet their situation in life. You think we're in society. We're not. There are people in Pittsburgh who won't know us at all. They don't admit that we exist. And there are others who are polite, merely because of what Mr. Lake can do for them in business."

It was all Greek to Martin, but he could see it was some-

thing he should learn about. He admitted to Mrs. Lake that he didn't understand what she was saying.

"In Europe we have noble families, who have been noble for a long time. You do not have that here," he said. "You can not—"

"No, here it takes only three generations. Our grandchildren—Mr. Lake's and mine—will be the noble families of tomorrow."

"Displacing," asked Martin, "the present nobility?"

"That depends. The ones at the top now might lose their money."

"Then they'd be out?"

"They might cling on for a little while, as the real society in Pittsburgh is doing now. But they'd be out eventually, unless they could use their connections to marry money, or to make some more."

Martin wanted to know if it were so important to be within this limited and distinguished class.

"You know how it is yourself," Mrs. Lake answered him. "You always want the best, don't you? You don't like being told you're not good enough. I'm not ambitious for myself, that way, but Mr. Lake's such a smart man, it seems too bad he shouldn't be at the top—at the top, I mean, in everything. As for the children, they have ponies and playhouses and good clothes, but that isn't enough. When they grow up, I want them to go round in New York with the Astors and the Vanderbilts, and have their names in the society columns, and go to London and be presented to Queen Victoria. Mr. Lake owns a great deal of property. Some people say he got it in ways that maybe he shouldn't have. I'll lay, the grandfathers of the people who won't know us weren't so fussy either, how they got ahead, and that the bunch who came over on the Mayflower cheated the Indians plenty."

"What was the Mayflower?" Martin asked.

"If you don't know, you better look it up. It was a ship."

"I came over on a ship, too," said Martin.

"I didn't think you swam!"

They both laughed at that mild disavowal. Mrs. Lake said she hadn't had such a good laugh in years. In talking with Martin, she lapsed into a sort of vernacular which was evidently the idiom of her girlhood—not the careful speech she used, as befitted the wife of a great man. Martin noted the difference because he himself was still a trifle self-conscious regarding speech. But she told him things. It was one of the ways in which he got along, that people did that.

"The history books haven't got it all," she went on. "Not by a jugful. Did you ever hear of Boston?"

"I've heard of it. It's a big factory town."

"They'd love to hear you say so! In Boston, there's society with a big S. And every Yankee dollar's founded on a quarter which was tucked away in the sea chest of some Yankee slaver."

"I thought they had slaves only in the South," Martin commented.

"Oh, sure—the good old South. I've always suspected that slavery—nigger slavery, anyway—wasn't suited to the northern winters. The Yankees were too shrewd to have passed up a good thing if they'd wanted it—in spite of their holier-than-thou habits. But I shouldn't talk. My grandfather was a Yankee. You see, I'm not like you and Mr. Lake and Mr. Rosch. I'm an American—and my people before me. It doesn't keep me from having ideas about my country—not that I'd want to live anywhere else. I can wave the Stars and Stripes as hard as anyone, when the occasion comes up."

Martin didn't believe everything Mrs. Lake told him, but what she said had enough of truth to be worth listening to. He'd have listened in any case, he liked her so much, and was a little sorry for her, and admired her all at once. Years

later, when he—and his wife—were able to speed for her the social advancement which for herself she always denied wanting, people thought it was for ulterior motives they did it, and didn't give Martin credit for his affectionate regard.

Martin, at that time, was a young man with his face wholly turned towards success. His sole relaxation was what of it he could gain from this entirely innocent friendship with Mrs. Lake. Looking back, he could hardly believe this, and credit this friendship with constituting almost his entire traffic with the fair sex over a period of some two years. It didn't match up with what he knew about the rest of his youth. Perhaps it was because he was working so hard—harder, at the various tasks Lake set him, than ever he had at those Captain Jones had demanded, or at any other labor. It took all his energies, and all his rather slow, but concentrated, thinking. Mistakes would be too costly. He found the path to greatness a thorny and a lonely path, at times, but he didn't dare let up. It was Mrs. Lake who made the whole thing bearable.

On Lake's advice, he had at last moved from the mill town, and taken more suitable quarters. He hadn't wanted to move, but he burned his bridges. He was forcing his way upwards, and there could be no rest from clinging to the ladder. He didn't need rest. What did it matter that he had to wear a coat at dinner, and that the woman who ran his present boarding house was neither as good a cook nor as agreeable as the German woman? The German woman had been nothing to him. Possibly she should have been more. Possibly he should have married her, if she would have had him. He would have to marry someone, sooner or later. There were women in Pittsburgh, plenty of women, both for marriage and not for marriage. But the first lot weren't good enough, and the second weren't, either—not beyond the brief moment of gratification they could offer. It was never

peace—it was never content—it was never a spring issuing from the earth to slake thirst. He wanted the best. His wanting it was the thing that drove him. And, in women, you didn't find the best for two dollars, or even five dollars, or ten, or for any sum taken so easily from the pocket. He wasn't interested in damaged goods, or goods not worth damaging.

Mrs. Lake told him he ought to get married—a fine young fellow like him—it was a shame he should stay single. It wasn't, she said, according to nature. And it wasn't, either, as if he hadn't proved himself a good provider. Lake spoke of it, too. A wife could help a man.

"The right wife," said Martin.

"Naturally, the right one! You don't want a woman who's going to run wild, spending your money, or one who isn't going to spend any of it. And I never did hold with the idea some men have, that in order to make a good wife a woman's got to be a nit-wit."

"Doesn't seem sensible—"

"No," said Lake, "it doesn't. Takes too much of a man's time, looking out for a woman like that. Now, if you could find the right girl—"

"Oh," said Martin, "when I find her, I'll move right in!"

Lake smiled. "That's the way to talk. You'll have no trouble. Women like you. I've been thinking over your situation for some time."

"You have?"

"Yes—given the matter quite a bit of thought. If you could find a girl with the right connections—"

"The right connections?" Martin wondered exactly what Lake meant. What he meant was sometimes dangerous, if you weren't sure what it was.

"Yes. A girl's family can do a great deal for a young man."

"You mean, I should marry an heiress?"

"That wouldn't be necessary. Though, of course, other

things being equal . . . If Mr. Carnegie had a daughter, for instance—”

Mr. Carnegie's daughter was not born till a good many years after this conversation, so the supposition was purely hypothetical. But Lake wasn't given to idle chatting, and Martin listened with a vague sense of foreboding to talk which, coming from someone else, might have meant little but a friendly interest in the welfare of a promising young man.

“Unfortunately,” Lake went on, “he hasn't a daughter. So we eliminate that. By the way, do you know anything about property in western Maryland?”

“I believe there are some mills there.”

“Yes—roller mills. There is also coal. And a considerable amount of acreage from which the coal has never been taken. As you know, I'm interested in coal.”

Martin was relieved at the sudden turn the talk had made. This was obviously business, not marriage, and he had no intention of marrying someone, just because Lake—for some reason or other—thought it would be a good thing. That was what he had been afraid of—that Lake had a wife picked for him; and he preferred to do his own picking.

“Why don't you buy this land?” he asked.

“It's not for sale.”

“You've managed to get control of a good deal of property that hasn't been for sale.”

“Yes, if there was something I could do about it. But the owner of the land in question isn't in business.”

“What does he do with his land?”

“I believe he hunts over it, and fishes. Has a remarkable, ramshackle old house he lives in part of the year. He hasn't one nickel to rub against another. And I've offered him a very fair price.”

“Is there something I can do?” Martin asked.

“Very possibly. The man's a Mr. Calverton. You surely

have heard the name. His father was one of those southern gentlemen whose fortunes took a turn for the worse at the time of the Civil War. His wife is from one of the old Dutch families of New York City. Socially, they're extremely prominent—or would be, if they had any money. I'd like to have you meet them. In fact, Mrs. Lake would like to meet them herself."

"I would be interested in knowing where I come into the picture. I would say my value would be nil."

"You underestimate yourself."

"Maybe so. What do you want me to do?"

"Nothing—at the moment. It's an interesting family. The children have been brought up in France, I understand—some rich relative who lives on the other side put up the money. They're very highly cultured." "Cultured" was a favorite word of Lake's. He admired culture, though he had little time for it himself.

"If the children are boys," suggested Martin, "and the right age, we could offer them jobs—jobs so good they could hardly afford to refuse."

"That would be simple," Lake said, "but the boys of the family are not the right age."

The subject was dropped then, and nothing more was said, either, about finding him a wife. After all, the Lakes didn't own him, even though they rather took it for granted that his whole time was theirs. It wasn't any twelve hour job he had now, with twelve hours more to himself. He slept in his new fine room with one ear cocked for the clatter of a messenger on the porch. But Martin didn't mind. He was being inducted into the ways by which men attain power. His beloved steel was a means, not an end in itself. Everything was a means—the mills, the furnaces, the endless procession of loaded cars, the inventions of men and the smoke which filled the sky. It wasn't the machine which counted—not the mechanical device—but the coordinated

activity of the great industry of which all this was a part.

Shortly before his death, Captain Jones had invented a hot metal mixer. It was made of plate steel and lined with fire brick. It held five hundred tons of molten pig, letting it lie quiet, keeping it warm, rocking it gently to one perfect and invariable mass. Martin would have sold his soul to have made such a piece, and—if he had gone on as he had been—it was conceivable that at some future time he might have matched it. But not now. He had not remained a workman. He must use in himself the talents which other men most valued in him. He could outguess them and out-trade them, and make them work and make them like it. Men trusted him and felt at ease in his presence. He could judge who must be wheedled and who sworn at. People did what he said to do—not always, but the percentage was high.

And sometimes—as with Lake—you must never say what to do, but let them have the saying, and be for them a voice and a shield. The price you paid was very high, but the price you received was high, too. It wasn't so much the money, but in what you learned. Learning of that sort helped you in the upward drive, a drive so smooth and so swift that you could almost feel the wind of it in your face, and bellying the coattails of your new good clothes. Lake had said, "You underestimate yourself—" Martin didn't. Just in Lake's presence, that was all. It was the only use to which he would put flattery.

9

That big place of the Lakes'—there were always guests there of one sort or another. At first Martin had been naive enough to think them the Lakes' friends, or at least the people they wished most to have for friends. But it was gradually borne in on him that the Lakes had no friends,

or practically none. Lake by temperament and Mrs. Lake by circumstance. She was cut off by money from the friends of her girlhood—they would have felt ill at ease in such surroundings—and she hadn't attained any genuine or lasting contacts. The people who came to the house were tied to Lake by bonds of self-interest, or were of the sort who didn't care much where they found lodging—or any entertainment—as long as it was obtained for nothing. They were like a mob, hired to fill a stage, wearing the right clothes, assembling at the feast table so that the viands offered will not go begging, giving the great house an air of bustling welcome. You couldn't have the place empty. You couldn't have those two, and the two little girls who had everything, rattling about in the midst of wasted space.

Lake was piling success on success, control on control. He would control the earth soon, and what would he do with it? Sigh, like Alexander, for new worlds to conquer? Mrs. Lake was the perfect helpmate. Oh, no, Lake could rest easy—she wasn't a nit-wit! And she had her children to think of. Martin began to understand why she wanted the things she did for them. Otherwise the money they would some day have would be as meaningless for them as for her. She talked to Martin a great deal about these matters. She seemed to think he could advise her. She came back again and again to her insistence that the children be rightly prepared to meet their situation in life. She didn't know just how to bring this about.

"There are schools," said Martin.

"I know. But the best ones wouldn't take them. The second best, I don't want."

"Have your own school—here."

"You mean, a governess? Some ex-lady down on her luck? Some shabby little woman, scared of her own shadow, who thinks she can manage children because she can't do anything else? I'm afraid that wouldn't be any use. Besides,

I've tried it and it doesn't work. Helen and Florence aren't dumb. If they think enough of you, they're all right; if they don't respect you, you might as well save your breath. I've had two women here to teach them, and nothing happened."

"You probably didn't pay them enough."

"I paid them plenty! Twice what they'd ever had before—a hundred dollars a month, if you must know."

"That's a ridiculous salary—"

"Isn't it? And all their expenses, too—they didn't have to spend a cent if they didn't want to."

"A thousand a month would be nearer the mark."

Mrs. Lake looked at him. "My husband told me you were crazy, but it was a kind of craziness he could use."

Knowing what to do for people to make them work for you—that was Martin's line. "Don't you see, Mrs. Lake, you're in the market for something that isn't for sale at a hundred dollars? You want the best—you can pay for it. Give them their own suite of rooms, just as if they were in a hotel, and a special servant to wait on 'em, and fixed hours when they're on duty, and fixed hours when they're not. Give them a carriage to drive around in, if you like—anything—everything. And then expect results. What kind of things do you want your daughters taught—outside of the—the—"

"The grand manner? Just the ordinary things. Books—a foreign language—a little music—"

"A woman such as you would have in mind would know all that. You're not particular that your girls should understand the modulus of elasticity, or be able to draw a diagram on stress-deformation?"

"Good Lord, no! But how'll I get in touch with such a woman? Put an ad in the paper?"

"You'd better talk with Mr. Lake about that. He knows men who've had money—and lost it."

"Men?"

"Well, they have families—women, I mean. And women are coming up in the world. They'd like a chance to make a thousand dollars a month, all clear and free, no matter who they are. It's not a life sentence—just an experiment. What have they to lose?" Martin paused. "Nothing—nothing at all."

He wasn't so sure of that now. And, as for losing, he himself hadn't lost, surely. It had been such a devastating idea—the whole thing—it had impressed Lake and verified Lake's judgment, if verification were needed, as to the winging capacities of this rather gifted tonnage man whom Bill Jones had sponsored and Charlie Rosch didn't like. It had surprised Martin a little that Lake had been so taken with the scheme. He didn't even know, at the time, that anything was being done about it. There were so many other things going on.

The stress of affairs mounted. That new plant Lake had obtained proved immensely profitable. They were building new blast furnaces and rolling mills, rolling structural shapes. Martin had been right about the use of steel in building. It was the coming thing—no doubt about it. Lake was here, there and everywhere. Mr. Carnegie had gone into politics on a scale. That left Lake with tremendous responsibilities. Not that steel and politics didn't work in together, in a way; but with Carnegie's spending so much time in Washington, somebody had to run things. Some of these sloughed off on Martin.

He didn't sleep with an ear cocked any more. What little sleep he had was too precious. He would get to bed some nights, not minding what messages he might miss. And some nights he didn't get to bed at all, but never took off his shoes from one morning till the night of the following day. There was a rumbling of trouble in the mills. Strikes threatened. Martin found that he was pretty good at settling strikes. So was Rosch. He and Rosch worked together, still not liking

each other, but pooling their interests in a common cause. Lake had no sympathy with labor. He couldn't even fake it, the way Rosch could, and turned a cold eye on any bargaining. If an inch were given, it was never on his say-so, but a measure which Rosch and Martin had meted out surreptitiously. He pretended not to see that his instructions had been eased.

It was a stormy November, sleet and snow and rain, and the wind blowing. Lake had been called to Chicago. Martin was supposed to join him there. Naturally, he usually obeyed Lake's wishes to the letter, but this time he altered the routine sufficiently to reach Chicago by a rather roundabout journey. He wanted a few hours in New York in order to see his cousin, Axel. He'd been thinking about Axel a great deal lately. He was in a position now to offer him a job. It wouldn't be much at first, but better than what Axel had. It was too bad that brains like that should be wasted in the pickle business. So Martin had his plans all made, and was throwing some things in a bag, when the loud ring of all telegraph boys pealed through the hall. It was a message from Lake—"Before you join me, run over to the house and see how things are there . . ."

Martin hadn't gone to the Lakes' place in several days—he'd been too busy. But, of course, he ought to go, before seeing Lake—and now that Lake had thought it worth while to telegraph him to that effect—well—he went on filling his bag. It wouldn't alter his plans too much. His cab was waiting to take him to the station. He'd drive, instead, to the Lakes' place, and get a later train. It was towards evening and Mrs. Lake would undoubtedly urge him to remain to dinner. He hoped she wasn't giving a dinner party. He was hardly dressed for such. She wouldn't mind, in any case. No, she wouldn't mind—in fact, she was delighted to see him. Her first words were strange:

"*She's* come."

"She? Who's she?"

The lower floor of the Lake establishment was a series of rooms—reception room, parlor, library, and, off to one side, the dining room. Martin had laid off his coat in the foyer, and set down his bag. It was in the reception room that Mrs. Lake had apparently been waiting for him. She must, in some manner, have learned that he was coming. Perhaps Lake had telegraphed her, also.

"Why, you know!" she answered Martin's question.

"I'm afraid I don't," Martin told her.

"The woman you recommended!"

He had recommended no woman to Mrs. Lake. He knew no woman whom he could possibly have recommended to her.

"I'm afraid I do not understand—"

"Of course you do—that teacher for the children— you said to get a teacher—well, we've got one."

The light dawned. "Oh . . . The one I said you'd have to pay a thousand dollars a month to—"

"We did—a thousand dollars on the nail—before she came."

"Where did you find her?"

"Mr. Lake found her—just as you said he could."

"It seems to me I said a great deal—one way and another." Martin had walked with Mrs. Lake from the reception room into the parlor. He now paused. He wasn't usually afraid of his own advice, but he felt, in this instance, that in giving it so freely he had overreached himself. If anything went wrong—and so many things might—his would be the blame. He had interfered in a matter which was really none of his business. And what was Lake trying to do—test out his theories on all fronts, and so discredit him? He remembered having told Mrs. Lake that the thing would be in the nature of an experiment. That put it mildly. But he might as well get it straightened out. "What's her name?" he asked. Not that her name would prove anything.

"We're to call her Miss Smith, though that isn't really who she is."

"Do you know who she is?"

"Of course—we know all about her."

"Is there so much to know?"

"You'll see."

"I don't know just what I'll see."

"Well, don't be so upset about it!" said Mrs. Lake, looking at him. "It's not your funeral, whatever happens. I'm very anxious you should meet her."

"I have no particular wish to meet her."

"Why not? She won't bite you." Mrs. Lake put her arm through his and led him down the long vista of the parlor. He was reminded of his first awkward treadings of that polished surface. "She's in the library, reading French to the children."

Martin had a considerable smattering of tongues, but French was not among them. It had never been the language of the day anywhere that his course had lain.

"Haven't they a sort of schoolroom?" he asked.

"Yes, but she makes a little treat of it—reading to them after their supper, before they go to bed."

"Do they respect her? You said that was important."

"How could they help it?"

How could they, indeed? A thousand dollars—on the nail . . .

The library was separated from the parlor by heavy velvet portieres. These were worked by a braided silk rope. Mrs. Lake pulled it. "There," she said, "you see—"

At first, Martin saw nothing. He had been aware of the low murmur of someone speaking. Now that the curtains were drawn wide, the speech came clear. But it didn't make sense. It was lucidly clear. It had a precision about it, and yet—being French—he had no idea what it meant.

"Tout passe! . . . La fleur d'oranger a fait son temps."

Martin never did know what it meant, but he remembered it, always.

"Oh," said Martin, and looked where the voice came from, illumined as that point was by lamplight and fire.

A woman sat there with an open book on her lap. Her hands lay across the page. They were not like a live woman's hands, but had the sheen and pattern of carved ivory. They had existed so, forever, relaxed and beautiful. As his gaze rose, he encountered the face to match them. The woman was young—younger than he was—but he didn't know why he could be so sure of this, because there was no especial look of youth in her. No warmth, no uncertainty, no seeking. Mrs. Lake had assured him they knew all about her. That was fortunate, because she knew all about herself, and who she was, and why she was there. The eyes came full under the rather heavy lids. Grayish green, they were, though he found that out later. The mouth was gracious and fine-drawn. The hair was brushed smoothly away from the white brow, and was a soft color—neither blonde nor brown, but shadowy with the tones of each. It shone in the firelight, as the silk dress she wore shone, and yet there was no red in it.

Mrs. Lake's entrance being established, she rose. You were surprised at the movement, she had seemed a figure wrapped in stillness. It would be part of the grand manner, to rise when an older woman entered the room. She didn't rise on account of Martin, that was plain enough. Martin saw that she was a little thing. Her waist he could have encircled with one hand. What he had expected, he didn't know. But certainly nothing such as this. No man could have expected this. Mrs. Lake had said she wouldn't bite him. A fact, doubtless, but his misfortune.

"Miss Smith, this is Mr. Lyndendaal, one of Mr. Lake's business associates."

"How do you do?" For a moment the eyes met his gaze.

The inclination of the perfect head was so slight it might have passed unnoticed, if anything about her might pass so.

He bowed. "How do you do?"

She had not offered him her hand. He saw now that the children were sitting on a low hassock. At a word from her they scrabbled upwards. They knew Martin well. "Hello—" they greeted him in one chorus.

"Hello—"

The little one, Helen, pressed forward. "Aren't you going to pick me up?" she asked.

"Of course—" That had grown to be a game between them. He leaned down and lifted the child high in the air. She kicked ecstatically, like a plump cherub on a church ceiling. His further view of Miss Smith was complicated by the child's flying legs.

Miss Smith smiled, with a trace of apology. "Now, now, Helen, that's enough!"

"Some day," said Mrs. Lake, "Mr. Lyndendaal is going to fasten Helen up there at the top, and leave her."

"Serve her right," said the other child. "Serve her right, for being so fresh!"

Martin set down the cherub.

"You're quite as fresh as she is, Florence, and have less excuse." Miss Smith delivered the rebuke lightly, the smile with it. "And now, if you'll both say good night to your mother and to the gentleman, you'll find Katie waiting for you upstairs."

"Yes, Miss Smith."

"Yes, Miss Smith."

The children did what she told them to do. There was no question of that. When they trooped off Mrs. Lake turned to Martin. "You're staying to dinner?"

"Why, yes, I—"

Mrs. Lake now addressed this extraordinary hireling. "And I hope you'll give us the pleasure of your company?"

"I shall be delighted—"

"Doesn't she usually?" Martin asked.

"Mrs. Lake insists that I have complete freedom—outside of my work with the children, that is." It was Miss Smith speaking. "There is a part of the house set aside entirely for my own use."

"Yes, she has her own suite," Mrs. Lake explained. "Two of the guest rooms fixed over. It's really quite nice. Don't you remember, that's what you said for her to have?"

The delicate eyebrows raised. "What Mr. Lyn—er—"

"Lyndendaal—"

"What Mr. Lyndendaal said?"

Martin felt himself turning the color of the fire. "I—I—I think Mrs. Lake has me mixed up with someone else. I didn't know you were coming at all. What could I have said?"

"Yes, of course—what could you?"

But it didn't fool her, he could see. She knew he'd said something—knew he was mixed up in what was none of his affair, really, and it puzzled and amused her. She had the advantage of him so patently. He should have shaken her—lifted her up as he had lifted the child, fastened her to the ceiling there, with her full skirts flying and her little feet kicking. The notion was more fanciful, even, than he had realized. There was no way to break that advantage—no way, ever. Mr. Lake's business associate was a young awkward peasant lad with great hands hanging out of his sleeves like hams, and a collar that was too tight, and stumbling movements which got him into a chair, finally, when the ladies had sat down. By a superhuman effort, he gained control of himself, his redness faded, the muscles that held his body functioned with a reasonable degree of neatness.

"And what do you do with yourself in your own part of the house?" He must talk to save Mrs. Lake from talking, who meant for the best, but might at any moment bring out

more of what Martin, in all innocence, had outlined. Besides, he wanted to know what this priceless creature did. He envisioned her sitting in state, dining as a queen might dine, who dines alone.

She didn't have to answer him. He had no right to intrude his questions. But she was kind. Perhaps that was included in the grand manner, being kind.

"What do I do? Sometimes, nothing. At the moment, I'm rather busy getting settled, planning a course of study for my little pupils, doing all the odds and ends I didn't have time for before I came."

"What she's really doing," said Mrs. Lake, "is writing letters to her family, telling them she's safe. They were very angry at her coming here. But she's over twenty-one, and they couldn't stop her."

"Mr. Lyndendaal must think my family very strange people!"

Martin could see she didn't like Mrs. Lake's telling him they were angry. She wouldn't regard as any of his business, her family's being angry.

"I'd have thought they were strange if they hadn't been angry," he reassured her.

"Why?"

"Naturally, they didn't want you to leave them—no one would!"

"Why, thank you—"

Her "thank you" made him realize he had paid her a compliment. He hadn't meant it so, but merely as an obvious statement of fact.

"Pay no attention to him," put in Mrs. Lake. "All the men are alike when it comes to a pretty face." And then to Martin: "That's going to be my trouble—keeping them away. You should have heard Charlie Rosch last night—"

"Was Rosch here?"

"And Mrs. Rosch," said Miss Smith.

"Oh," said Mrs. Lake, "that doesn't cramp Charlie's style, but she's used to it by now."

"I'm sure," said Miss Smith, "Mr. Rosch was only trying to be agreeable. After all, as he was placed next to me at dinner, he had to entertain me."

"I thought you had dinner in your rooms," said Martin.

"Mrs. Lake thought it would amuse me—"

"Well, the next time Charlie Rosch comes here—"

"I'll lock myself in, and, if that isn't practical, I'll send for you to protect me."

"It'll be a pleasure," said Martin. The girl was laughing at him. Nevertheless, his imagination soared. Charlie Rosch trying to pull something, and being felled to the ground for it in one swift, well directed blow. No time wasted—plunk. "Mr. Rosch," Martin went on, "is a very able man at the mills, but where ladies are concerned, he's—" There was a pause for the right word. Miss Smith supplied it.

"Dangerous?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Lake, "not like Mr. Lyndendaal that way."

"And how is Mr. Lyndendaal—that way?"

"Sweet and innocent and kind—just like a baby."

Again he heard the girl's laughter. It was a small and lovely sound. There was an old folk tale about sailors stranded on a coral reef, and hearing the laughter of mermaids and plunging into the sea after them, never to return.

Martin had never understood the myth. Men could laugh, but women were not at their best at it. They giggled or cackled or whinnied, they could never give themselves wholly to mirth. To do so took a type of assurance they lacked. Perhaps it was that they didn't know all about themselves, as this girl did. She was young, and yet she was complete. He could tell it now, looking back at this first sight he'd had of her, and looking at her again as time followed. She did not change as the years passed. A little—a very little. There

was a mark of change, here and there. Her hair was shot with a fleck of silver at last, and her smooth skin dulled a bit. But she was not molded by living, or time, or experience, or by Martin himself. The mold of her was set at twenty-two, the pattern cut, the cooling process well begun. Further cooling hardened the form, as cooling must. Yet there was no brittleness, for that means breakage, and this woman who became Martin's wife never broke. To the day of her death she was smooth and hard and strong, in spirit if not in flesh.

Martin admired her, always. He respected her. He was in a sense very fond of her. Thinking back now, he knew that at the beginning, and for a time after the beginning, he had been madly and violently in love with her. That he didn't go on loving her was probably her fault—not her intentional fault, but something in the hard mold of her for which she could be in no way blamed. He wasn't excusing himself. He wasn't providing an alibi to defend himself for things he had done. That would be too easy. It would be simple, to call her a woman incapable of loving, or returning love. You couldn't call her such. She had loved her son. It might be that all women loved their sons. Martin's own mother had loved him, and died on account of him. Well, in a quite different sense possibly, Julian's mother had died on account of Julian.

Over thirty years it was before she died. She had borne Martin three children, she had never been unfaithful, she had advanced his interests in every way. She had pulled him right up to the top. He might not have got there without her. There was a ruthless streak in her, and a gambler's streak. She had come of a long line of ancestors who had sat late over card tables. She had made him say, no, to chances which tempted him, and, yes, to others for which—alone—he might not have had courage to use the word. Her judgment had always been sound. She had completed for him the process

which, it was true enough, he had begun for himself—the process of becoming a gentleman. She knew the value of money as he never did, and what it would buy, and what was worth buying. While people like the Lakes were struggling to attain the best, she placed the best in his lap with one of those unmatchable gestures of her perfect hands.

But she didn't love him. That was all that was wrong between them. She might have married Lake or Rosch, or any one of this little group of exceptional men. It wouldn't have mattered to her, greatly, which one. But none of the others were single. Or she might not have married at all, but continued as governess to the Lake children, at a thousand dollars a month. The celibate state would have suited her. That it didn't suit Martin was one of the things she despised him for. No, this wasn't quite the way of it. There wasn't any foolishness about her. She had rather a strong sense of what—as her husband—was Martin's due. She would as soon have refused any reasonable demand of his as she would have been, in any other way, disloyal either to his interests or to his person. She treated him, always, with the most exquisite courtesy. He would have preferred, at times, that she had wept or screamed or beaten him with her fists.

He wondered—he wondered yet—if she ever knew that the scorn she had for him showed its edges. She had hidden it away so carefully, as one hides a secret package in the back of a closet. But sometimes the closet door stands open and the package is pushed forward by a searching hand. That was Martin's one real cleverness—his instinctive knowledge of what people thought of him. His admiration, his respect, even his very genuine attachment for her, all survived what his wife thought. It was only his love for her that hadn't lasted. All this was never voiced between them. Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal was a very great lady, and there are certain matters which great ladies do not talk about—not unless they wish to.

In this fine house where Martin had spent so many years of his life, in this room with the windows facing the Park trees where he sat with his thoughts for company, it was hard for him to believe wholly that his wife had passed on to a world where houses were unneeded. If he listened close he could hear her voice in the drawing room beyond, entertaining friends at tea. That space had long been changed to the uses of his illness, and the faint clatter he heard was not the clatter of silver and china, but something Eric was doing with disinfectants and glassware. Martin's eyes refused such sights. They were occupied, rather, with looking up—ignoring the barrier of the ceiling, and the floor which was still the floor of the bedroom above. Who occupied that room now? No one, Martin was pretty sure. It was still his wife's room. No one had a better right than she, therefore, to stand before the triple-paned mirror trying the effect of a gown or a hat or a necklace. That chatter on the stairs—it would be she again, saying something to Sarah or to Fanny, coming back with them from somebody's wedding or charity bazaar or coming-out reception. She made a perfect ghost. You could not ask love from a ghost. You could not ask it even from Martha, who was not a ghost, but quick with life. Of the women he had ever known, there were just these two now. And you could never ask love from either of them.

10

Martin hadn't gone to New York that night. Seeing Axel could wait. The man he must see was Lake. Lake would tell him something he must know. He'd seen the woman he intended to marry, and there seemed to be some mystery about her. Not that it mattered, really, but he might as well have the mystery solved. Lake would tell him who she was. Mrs. Lake had refused this information, point-blank—said

Miss Smith didn't want her right name known, and she, Mrs. Lake, saw no cause to give it out to the first man who asked for it. There was a certain reasonable quality in this which Martin couldn't do much about.

"I'm not sure I'd have had her," Mrs. Lake had said, "if I'd known she was such a beauty. It's going to be a bother."

"Do you mean to say, you didn't know?"

"How could I? It was Mr. Lake who talked with her, and he didn't say anything. Maybe he didn't notice it. It would be like him, not to. That's one thing about him, he's not one to get all excited over the turn of an ankle."

Martin took the midnight train to Chicago. He could have remained at the Lakes' house overnight, inveigling Mrs. Lake into letting him stay. But, if he'd stayed, all he could have done would have been to sit and gawp at the divinity until she'd removed her devastating person to her own sacrosanct domain. And he wouldn't have put it past himself, in the state he was in, to have set up a vigil outside her door then. He had no wish to be made a fool of, and he felt such making imminent. After all, Lake expected him in Chicago, and he'd telegraphed him to stop at the house and see how things were. How were things in any house which harbored such a being? Not peaceful. Lake wouldn't have thought it could be peaceful.

Martin went straight from the train to the Auditorium Hotel, where Lake always stayed. He likely wouldn't be there in the middle of the morning—he wasn't—he was at the Carnegie Chicago offices. Martin left his bag at the hotel and followed him there, where there was much business afoot, and much talk of the new company to be formed. But, for once, Martin wasn't interested in business. He was waiting for Lake to ask him how things were at the house, where he'd gone—after all—on Lake's order. But Martin's superior kept the question in abeyance, regarding him quizzically occasionally from beneath bushed brows, as though he were quite

aware of the young man's eagerness. He reminded Martin of a fisherman playing a fish.

They had been alone together for some moments before Lake spoke: "Well? You found everything in shape? Mrs. Lake and the children—"

"Who is she?" Martin cut in.

"She?"

"Miss Smith."

"Oh—so you met her. I thought you would. She's a very unusual young woman, isn't she?" Lake was always a master of understatement.

"Yes," said Martin, "but her name's not Smith."

"So I'm aware. I think it was Shakespeare who said, 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'"

Martin had studied a little Shakespeare at school. "'What's in a name?' " he quoted, "'That which we call a rose—' But I'd like to know—"

Lake was smiling. "As long as it's 'Miss,' and not 'Mrs.'—that's the first thing, I suppose—"

"She said her family were angry—or, rather, Mrs. Lake said it—"

"Yes, unfortunately. Her family don't regard me too highly. Her father has consistently refused to sell me his coal acreage, and I'm reaching a point where I must have it."

"Oh—Calverton!"

"That's it—Frances Calverton. She has a younger sister and two young brothers—children. She's rather the flower of the flock."

"Western Maryland—I remember. You said that this man, Calverton, had an old house on the land. There was some relative in Paris who'd—"

"Those are the people. You outlined a plan to Mrs. Lake, and I saw how it could be worked in. I made a special trip there—called—was fortunate in finding Miss Calverton alone—we understood each other at once."

"You mean, about the coal acreage? I don't see what she could do about that."

"The coal acreage wasn't mentioned."

"You mean the thousand dollars a month—"

"That, and other considerations. Her family haven't the means to take up the position which is their right. I intend moving to New York in the not too distant future. I would give Miss Calverton her own establishment there, as long as she would continue as a sort of mentor for my girls. With her brains and her beauty, she is absolutely buried as she is—it seems such a pity."

"Mrs. Lake said you probably hadn't noticed it."

"Noticed what?"

"That she was good looking—you certainly hadn't told her about it—I mean, told Mrs. Lake."

"I saw no necessity of telling Mrs. Lake." Lake seemed to read Martin's thoughts. "I assure you that I myself am not in the least personally interested. It's purely business—a plan which happens to suit the needs of the occasion."

"You offered her all this, just on the chance that, through her, you could in some way get her father's land?" It seemed to Martin a long chance, though he could hardly say so.

Lake went on: "Well, the upshot of our talk was that she accepted my offer. While I'm not, like you, one to get along with everyone, I do get on with a limited group of superior minds. I know what to say to such people, and they know what to say to me. I liked Miss Calverton. I flatter myself the liking was mutual. We both accepted the fact of her family's opposition, but there was very little they could do."

"I can see that," said Martin. There was one of Martin's pauses, and then—"I suppose, when she goes to New York, she won't be buried. But even now—well, she's hardly buried in East Liberty."

Lake still was smiling. "No, I fancy the competition will be rather heavy."

Martin afforded to ignore the pleasantry. "New York won't be for a year or so."

"Probably not."

"Would you mind very much if I upset your plans? Because, if I can, I will."

Lake had turned to some papers on his desk. He spoke, finally. "Frankly, I had hoped you'd feel that way about her. Go ahead, my son, marry her if you can, with my blessings."

"And the coal acreage?"

"Yes—the coal acreage."

It seemed as if Martin did nothing but recall old folk myths. What was the one about the king of the earth's surface, who wanted for himself the kingdom beneath its surface, and so married his daughter to the prince there?

"Such a wife," said Lake, "entirely apart from coal, could do a great deal for a man. Your gain will be my children's loss, but you'll have to make your peace with Mrs. Lake on that score."

You went through things at the time, quite without thought, taking incidents in your stride and for granted, and then—remembering—were brought up short with a sudden understanding of meanings which, for the moment, you had been too pressed to grasp. That's how it was in regard to this talk with Lake. Later, thinking it over, bringing it out and looking at it, Martin realized what an extraordinary talk it was, both on Lake's part and on his own. It was what Martin had been afraid of, that Lake had a wife picked for him. Now the thing had happened, and he didn't mind. That was one thing. And his taking Lake so promptly into his confidence—that was another. And Lake's giving him his blessing—blessings not being Lake's specialty. It wasn't at all the way most courtships began, with coal lands in the offing and the good wishes of the great. It was a situation far more usual in Royal circles. The stokehole and the servants' quarters at the inn were fading far into the background.

At lunch Martin insisted on buying champagne, and Lake who never drank, must taste it, holding the glass high and drinking a silent toast to the success of a venture regarding which Martin—usually inclined to optimism—felt less and less secure. In fact, the more Martin thought about it—and he had ample time for thought on the train that afternoon—the more he saw no reason whatever why a girl such as this one should consent to marry him. Lake seemed to regard the whole matter as good as settled, but Lake was not emotionally involved. Gloom enwrapped Martin, and the after effects of a quart of champagne consumed at midday. What could he do? He certainly couldn't make a bee line from the train to the Lakes', demand "Miss Smith's" presence, and say to her—all in one breath—"Divine creature will you be mine?" He couldn't hit her over the head with a club, either, and drag her by the hair to a convenient cave.

He had absolutely no experience in laying siege to the heart of a woman, not a woman such as she. What was it Mrs. Lake had said of him in regard to them—sweet and kind and innocent, just like a baby! Hardly that. Women liked him—Mrs. Lake and the German woman; and others he had known, in a manner, better. One or two whom he had met at the Lakes' house had made quite a set at him, let him know, not too subtly, that they thought him attractive and would be open to the milder advances, even to more serious intentions. But these last he hadn't wanted to marry, and he knew how they would have raised their eyes in high horror at any hint of a less permanent relationship. Holding hands in the murky moonlight, beneath the statuary, with now and then a kiss snatched, was his idea of nothing to do. He wished now he had cultivated their acquaintance more assiduously. It might have taught him something he needed to know.

Lake expected him to go straight back to Pittsburgh—that was where he'd started for. But he changed trains at Cleve-

land and went to New York. He would see his cousin, Axel. He might not say anything to Axel, except to offer him this job he had in view for him, but he would see him anyway, and gain time and courage. He telegraphed Lake of his change of plans, he telegraphed Axel, who was waiting for him at the train gate.

"Well, Axel—how's the pickle business?"

His cousin looked at him in surprise. He had addressed him in English. He thought in English most of the time now. He reverted hastily to their mother tongue. Though Martin had been in New York on several occasions, he hadn't seen Axel in over a year—not even for a moment. He saw him now, and that the pickle business wasn't very good. He who made his living from it had none of the sleekness of success. Martin would alter all that. He would bring Axel up in the world.

The former relation between the two had been shifted. Martin could now tell Axel what to do. He planned to take him to a good hotel, have a long talk with him, show him how men could live who did well. But it didn't work out quite so. Axel refused to go. He had made all arrangements that Martin should come with him to the shabby Scandinavian lodging he himself called home. Martin was to be his guest—not Axel, Martin's. They walked east to Third Avenue, and then down, under the El pillars, and stopped at a saloon and bought some beer to bring back, and turned again, and climbed up a high brown stoop. Axel let them into the house with his key. It was the swiftest journey that Martin had ever taken. It was like being shifted about in a time machine, or one that made nothing of space.

The house was clean, and the odor of cooking that clung to it was of a hearty northern substance. Axel used his key again, and ushered Martin into a darkness which the lighting of a gas jet revealed as cover for a room which was part of a past he had left behind. It contained something of the farm-

house, something of Odense, something of the German woman's place. Nothing of grand caravansaries and champagne and velvet lined libraries where beautiful women sat before ornate fireplaces and read French to children who must be trained to grace their station. There were no furnaces that spouted flame, no metal heating and cooling and being rolled to the shapes of industry.

There was food set out on a little table near which two chairs were drawn. The chairs were covered in a flowered cotton material which reminded Martin of the curtain behind which he had hung his new good clothes on that day when he had first attained them. The beer was keeping cold on the fire escape outside the window. They would bring it in when they felt need of it. There were no servants here, in white coats, popping up at a word or the touch of a bell, and no private baths, but a cubicle down the hall with a tub made of zinc and encased in brown stained wood.

"It's like old times, isn't it, Martin?"

"Isn't it?" Martin didn't say how much like old times it really was. "I suppose you'll be sorry to give it up here."

"Why should I give it up?"

Martin told him then about this job he had for him in the office of one of the mills. "It isn't much—just keeping a set of books. We have to have someone on whom we can rely completely—and if I vouched for you—"

"How could you vouch for me?" Axel asked.

"You were always clever, Axel—I can vouch for that—and everything else about you, too, I guess. The pay would not be much at first, but more than you get now, and soon—in a couple of months perhaps, as soon as you were proved to be the man for the work, you'd have at least three hundred dollars a month, and soon again much more. After that, it would be up to you, yourself. I expect to be a partner in the company before long. I should have your interests always at heart."

Martin talked on like this for some minutes. He was anxious to get the matter settled and to be able to go on to other topics. But, the more he talked, the less settled it seemed to be. Axel just sat, leaning back in his chair, with his thin legs crossed, smoking, saying nothing, sipping occasionally from his beer mug, or cutting a slice of bread from the long loaf which lay on the board. And Martin told him about steel—this was the age of steel—it was a metal upon which the clever man could ride to fortune. Opportunity beckoned. And here was Axel, wasting himself in the pickle business!

"Well, Axel, well—" Martin felt his cousin had been silent long enough.

He could never tell what Axel was thinking. Now less than ever, somehow, with the weight of importance shifted between them, and yet in a manner not shifted. Martin had said to him all he had to say. He waited. Axel at last made a strange answer:

"You always had big ideas, Martin. You remember my telling you so, and that one of these days you'd surprise yourself?"

"Oh, it was you who had the ideas, Axel! When I came to your father's farm that first time, I knew nothing. You opened my brain, just as if you'd taken a knife to it. Without you, I would never have got along."

"An obligation of which you are not now unmindful?"

"It isn't that. I need you. I need your cleverness—your advice. The people I see are either above me or below me. There is no one to whom I can turn—no one except you."

"Don't tell me," Axel said, "that your head in its fine crown lies uneasy on the pillow!"

Martin's head was uneasy now. He felt that Axel was laughing at him, for some obscure reason. "I'd like your answer. Will you come? It's a chance any man in your position would jump at."

"The money tempts me. I need money. But you'll have

to give me time to think it over. There's someone I must ask."

"Who? This man you work for? He would naturally say, no—not wanting to lose you."

"Not he. I must ask Anna."

"And who is Anna?"

"You do not know her. She is the woman I am going to marry." Axel brought it out casually, as if it were nothing. "I wanted to tell you before, but there has been so much to say. Aren't you glad for me, Martin?"

Martin was glad, of course, and hastened to say so. "What is she like? Where does she come from?"

"From Denmark—like us. Her name is Anna Neergaard. She is a little older than I am. She is a working woman. If you must know, Martin, she is cook in a big house here. She wants me to go into business for myself. I am saving money for that, and she is, too. In a few years more we will have the money saved, and then we will be married. We have everything planned. She is not one to have her plans upset too easily."

"Plans are made to be upset when the right chance comes."

"Anna might not think so."

"I see," said Martin. "When I want you, I must deal with her. It's a bad beginning for marriage, to let a wife do your thinking for you. Besides, what does she know of business?"

"She knows enough to know that three hundred dollars a month is a great deal of money to be paid for keeping a set of books."

A great deal of money! Why such a sum was nothing to Martin now. But to a cook, of course, it might seem a great deal. Martin was long past such seeming—Martin, square-head from the stokehole, had seen a woman who was not a cook, whatever else she was. It had been in the back of his mind to-night, after business matters had been settled, to

ask Axel's advice about the winning of such a woman. He had felt that Axel would help him, and could help him, but now he wondered. Well, after all, Axel had evidently experienced no difficulty regarding his own courtship. But it was one thing to persuade a cook—not pretty, doubtless, a woman whose best days for choice were over—and quite another matter to lay your case before a girl like Frances Calverton, who must know that the whole world of men is for her choosing. She was so fragile, so fine. In touching her, you would be afraid. At home in Denmark, Martin's mother had had a little tree made of sea shells. It was under a glass bell to keep the dust away. It was infinitely precious—not to be examined by inquiring fingers, but to be admired from a distance. Frances Calverton had already been admired in such a way. But she would not, like the little tree, be standing waiting on a shelf built high in the woodwork, and helpless against pillage. She could refuse seizure.

Axel Christiansen, who had so many of the attributes of a fine gentleman, was content to marry a cook. He was a bit smug about it, Martin thought, as though such contentment were a mark of the superior being he was, and a reminder to his cousin that Martin's mother, Axel's aunt, had also been a cook. And a very good one, too, Martin remembered—quite as good as this Anna could possibly be. With an effort, Martin brought himself back to the matter immediately at hand:

"What is wrong with keeping a set of books? You speak as if it were not honest. Every large organization has their own private records, not open to the public, to stockholders, labor unions—"

"So I've heard. And I might become involved. And being, as you say, clever, I might involve myself deeper."

This didn't make sense. Sometimes the things Axel said didn't. And there was little more sense in what he went on

to say: "When a person is clever, they must be doubly careful what opportunities they permit themselves. The mind works quickly, and may run along devious paths. Hunters will tell you, Martin, that a creature who moves quickly is the easiest to trap."

"All right, Axel, everyone has to do what is best for themselves. You ask this Anna of yours what she thinks, and let me know. I can't keep the job open forever."

"I wouldn't wish you to. I'll let you know. But I don't hold out too much hope."

Martin had come here, not as a suppliant, but—at considerable inconvenience to himself—to offer his cousin the chance of a lifetime. He hadn't expected him to fall on his neck in gratitude—that wasn't Axel's way—but he certainly hadn't expected this coolness. The opinion of Anna was only an excuse. He felt, already, that Axel had not the least intention of coming to Pittsburgh. He didn't have to come, not if he didn't want to. If it had been any other man, Martin would have gathered up his hat and coat and bidden farewell—found a cab, if such were to be found in that benighted neighborhood, and spent what remained of the night in a decent hotel. But you couldn't do that to Axel. There was something about the man ingratiating and proud. It removed him from any rudeness, either received or given. Besides, he was Martin's kinsman—the two had many memories in common—there was no use in quarrel.

"It's a pleasant place you've made yourself here," Martin said.

"Pleasant enough."

"Will you go on living here after you're married?"

"I don't believe so. Anna will want a regular little apartment, with a bathroom and a kitchen and all that. We've been looking at places in Brooklyn. You can get a nice fresh place—something they call a flat—four or five rooms all complete, very reasonable."

"Tell me more about Anna. What does she look like?"

"She's a fine looking woman—big and strong. One feels safe with her—comfortable—and that many years from now it will be the same."

The venturesome Axel, wanting things the same—safe—comfortable. But Axel had always had a cautious streak. He had never been brave—not in the ordinary sense, anyway. His bravery was in another sense altogether.

"I feel about Anna," Axel went on, "that she is a strong tall tower."

"From whose pinnacle you view the world?" asked Martin.

"If you care to put it so. Why don't you get married? It isn't good for a man to live by himself."

Yes, that was what everyone was advising him—to get married. As if he himself didn't want to! Perhaps Axel could help him, after all.

Martin spoke slowly, picking his words. He hadn't been so successful with the other project he had laid before his cousin. "I told you a while ago, Axel, that I needed you—that there was no one except you to whom I could turn. In business matters that is not perhaps wholly true. But for my own self it holds. You are to be married. It is odd, my learning that from you now, because I, too, would like to be married. I have seen a woman, but she is not like your Anna, she is not what you would call 'our kind.' It would be as though I had raised my eyes to a great lady. How does one go about such a venture? Do you know?"

"Possibly, Martin, she is wondering the same thing."

"That could not be—"

"And why not? You could at least pretend that it could."

"What good would it be to pretend?"

"It will give you confidence—get you through the earlier stages until you know her better—and then, if she favors you, she will make it easy. You have much to offer a woman. You are handsome, kind, destined for great things. I think you

know that about yourself. Give this woman credit for knowing it, too."

"We met each other but the one time."

"Evidently a great deal took place."

"Nothing took place."

"I did not mean that. When two people meet, and suit each other, there is generated in the space about them a disturbance like waves—like lightning. It is an electric disturbance possibly—it strikes a sort of spark. I have been reading lately about this scientist, Heinrich Hertz, who has been experimenting with the causing of waves to be made by electricity in free space. It is a radiation of energy. He has a machine for bringing this about. But why should not the mind or soul, or something in our beings even less defined, and not to be expressed in the speech or movement of our bodies—"

It was characteristic of Axel to talk about the radio long before the thing had been invented—to have read of its earliest stirrings, and to tie that up with the perfectly simple and age-old circumstance of love. Martin remembered this always. It was part of the recondite and peculiar gifts possessed by this young man who worked in a warehouse and refused an offered way to fortune. And he remembered, too, cutting him off:

"That's all very interesting, Axel, but it doesn't help me. I have seen this girl—I want her for a wife—what shall I do to get her?"

"Is she ambitious?"

"I think so."

"Then you two should get along famously. Tell her what you expect of yourself. Talk. You talk well. Speak of the farms and the ships and all you have done—or almost all—what you will do, of course. You have much to offer. Start offering it. Send her flowers, books, discover her taste in such matters and follow it. Christmas is not too far. At Christmas

send her flowers the cost of which would pay food and lodging for one of your mill hands for a month. You are a young man of substance. The dainty feet of the lady you love will tread nothing harsher than rose leaves. And then, as I have said, if she favors you she will make it easy."

There was nothing so startling in the procedure Axel outlined, but, as Martin had had in mind no procedure whatever, what he suggested was like a spar thrust out to a man drowning. A while ago Martin had been angry at him. The anger had cooled. Now it was wholly gone. How could you remain angry at a rescuer?

"What time is it, Axel? I set my watch in Chicago, and the time is different there. An hour later, is it?"

"It's two o'clock—"

"That's not late. My train leaves at seven. Get your coat—come out—"

"Come out where?"

"How should I know where? There are places open. I must drink your health, and you mine."

"I was thinking of sleeping a bit."

"On a night like this? Sleep is for weaklings—those who are afraid they will fall apart if they do not lay their bones out straight for a while each night. Plenty of time for that in our coffins. Come—"

Axel laughed. "Your coffin is a long way off, Martin. The tree for it is not yet planted. I'll go out with you. When we are married we will not be able to do such things."

They were already getting into their coats. "You may not," said Martin. "As for me, I fancy my wife will be glad to be rid of me once in a while. Well, well, listen to me talking as though she were already promised—just because you've given me some good advice!"

Martin took his bag with him. He would go straight to the train—or as straight as might be. That bag nearly got him into trouble. He and Axel were walking across town,

Martin carrying the bag, and a policeman stepped up. He was bigger than any policeman had call to be.

"Would you mind," he said to Martin, "letting me see what's in that bag of yours?"

"I might mind," said Martin.

The policeman eyed him suspiciously. "Come on—come on—open it up—"

Martin hadn't hit anyone in a long time. It occurred to him that this was a good chance. But why should he, after all? Why should he land in jail for the night when he wanted to have a good time? Besides, he might miss his train, and Lake—if he heard about it—wouldn't like that very much. So, instead of letting go at the officer of the law, who was doing only what he supposed to be his duty, he set the bag down on the pavement, opened it, and displayed the harmless paraphernalia of overnight travel. "You see—"

"All right. I thought it might be somebody's silver—it's kinda late. No offence. That's a pretty neat shirt you've got there."

"I'd give it to you gladly," said Martin, "but I have use for it myself. I'm taking the early train for Pittsburgh, and when I get there I'm going to call on a lady. You wouldn't want me not to look as well as I can, would you?"

"I bet you'd look good—even without a clean shirt." The policeman went on his way, swinging his night stick, and Martin turned to Axel.

"He thought we were house-breakers—"

Axel shrugged. "Those men are pretty good judges of character—"

Martin had stayed his hand from striking the officer, but he swung out at Axel, softly, just as a comradely gesture, and Axel swung back at him. And so they went on down the dimly lighted street, laughing and pushing as if they were drunk—which they weren't—or at least as if they were two boys let out from school.

11

Axel had told him to talk about himself—of the farms he'd known and the ships he'd sped upon their ways, and what he expected to accomplish. It wasn't easy. "Miss Smith" wasn't always on view. She seemed to prefer the privacy which lay within her right. This privacy had been Martin's idea in the first place. Of course, without the promise of it she might not have come to the Lakes' at all. Flowers he could send. These could penetrate to the sacred precincts where no rough-shod foot might tread. For these he received the briefest of notes:

"Dear Mr. Lyndendaal—Thank you so much—the roses [or lilies or whatever it might be] are very lovely. Sincerely, Frances Calverton."

He had used her right name in sending them, and, as she made no comment on this, it was plain the Lakes had told her that he knew it. What else they had told her, he didn't let himself consider. It was more than apparent to everyone in the house—even the servants—what the state of his heart was. In fact, Miss Calverton was the only person who seemed unaware of it.

One day the thanks varied: "What do you expect me to do with the flowers, Mr. Lyndendaal? Vases are becoming a scarcity."

He cut down the quantity then. The obliging Pittsburgh florist obtained single orchids and bunches of Parma violets and the French flowers, camellias. All these the lady could wear. In fact, Martin had a glorious glimpse of her doing this very thing. She was getting out of a carriage in Pittsburgh with the little girls. His camellias nestled on the fur about her throat. He had seen her from across the street. It took him a moment to follow her into the shop she had entered, and when he arrived there she and her charges had

gone on to some upper fastness where he could not pursue.

That night he composed a letter. He never sent it. It was too awkward, too blunt. She might laugh. Axel had said she would make it easy for him. If he called this making it easy—anything would be easier than this terrible uncertainty, this waiting, this being afraid to force his way. His pre-occupation interfered with his work. That he couldn't have. So again, he wrote:

"Dear Miss Calverton, I saw you today in the city, wearing my flowers. Does this great favor mean you are considering me?"

He searched for further words—discarded them when found—signed his name, and, next morning, enclosed the note in his daily offering. He had work which must be done, else he felt he never would have lived through that day. Late at night he arrived at his lodgings. A note awaited him: "Dear Mr. Lyndendaal, I have been considering you for a long time. I am sure that when you call to-morrow evening, Mrs. Lake will be kind enough to loan us the use of her library, in order that I may hear what you may have to say." This was what Axel had meant by making it easy. This was a sign from heaven. This was the voice of all the angels singing.

Till the next evening, all clocks stopped. Seconds were minutes and minutes hours. He must see to this and he must see to that, and he supposed he did so. He was not arrested or run down, or involved in Captain Jones' metal mixer, or fallen into a pool of molten steel. No one looked at him dubiously, or seemed to wonder at him. Great joy, like great pain, numbs the senses. You cringe but you do not scream. Martin forgot about the scarcity of vases, and that Christmas was yet a week off. "I'm coming at eight," he wrote on a card among his roses. He bathed, he shaved, he dressed, he arrived. The servant ushered him into the library. The room was empty. Soon the emptiness was divinely filled. Frances Calverton came towards him, faintly smiling. He met her—

she offered him her hand now. What he said was not what he had intended saying:

"You hardly know me."

"You hardly know me," she answered.

"You are in my thoughts night and day, constantly, for a month now."

"What a nuisance I must have been!"

She withdrew her hand. They sat down. Martin was glad to sit down. Trembling as he was, the effort of standing was too great. The only way to conquer fear was to ignore it, so he spoke: "You hardly know me, but you must know where I come from—what I have done."

"You have done well," she said.

"I take little credit for that. I have been lucky—not once but many times. I shall continue to be lucky. And if you marry me there is nothing that I cannot do."

"I believe that. I have the greatest faith in you. I shall be glad to marry you."

The sweat broke out in beads upon his forehead. "I do not know what is so hard about telling you that I love you."

"That, too, I believe," she said.

She spread out her hands in a little gesture of surrender, and he came over to her with the thought to take her in his arms. Instead, he buried his head in her lap. It was as if he gave her, with his head so bowed, everything that was his, everything he was. Possibly, she should not have accepted it, not loving him. But she never said she loved him. For her to have said this would have been too much to ask of that moment, or of any moment for a long time.

It would be a natural occupation for a man, looking back at his life, to pick here and there from it a perfect interval—a space unmarred by any disfigurement or frustration or word that could be changed for the better. So Martin must count this hour, always. Its limitations were imposed from without, not from any fault intrinsic in itself. He could wait for her

now, knowing he had her. He could wait with an extraordinary measure of patience. He didn't mind the sound of people moving about in other rooms, or that they were not alone together on a desert island. There had been a dinner in progress when he had first come—though he had been unaware of it at the time—and the dinner guests had now evidently left the dining room and assembled themselves elsewhere. There was a sort of muted clatter, incidental to the serving of coffee. It was certainly not the complete privacy for which, before now, he had longed. Now all his longings were set at rest by this miraculous promise. It required no privacy to sit here, envisioning the future, calling up the past, so Frances Calverton would know just what kind of man he was—and bringing, where the past met the future, the whole of life to a sort of point. It was how life might rush together when a man is dying.

She talked, too—told him something of her life, her people, the house she had been born in, and still lived in for the most part:

"It is a very large house—almost as big as this one—not like it, otherwise. The roof leaks quite badly. When it rains hard, you can hear the dripping in the various pans which we must set to catch the water. I must warn you, Martin"—she had never called him Martin before—"that I am very practical. I should have sold some of the family silver and mended the roof, if I'd had my way. But my opinion was never asked in such matters. Your people were simple peasants but, at home, you were always warm and snug and had enough to eat, didn't you?"

"Why, yes—"

"Your life has been so different from mine that it would be hard for me to explain to you the things that my people must have, and those they can do without. A kind of show goes on. We have servants to serve what we have, and there is silver and fine linen and old china; and what else there is

considered unimportant, except when my father entertains. I don't really know how we could have managed sometimes, if it hadn't been for my Aunt Clem, who lives in Paris and has a beautiful house facing the Tuileries Gardens. My sister and I lived with her there for several years—went to school—later, she introduced us to society. It was interesting, but little more. Young girls abroad are expected to have a dot—that means a fortune—especially young American girls. I shall be honest with you, Martin, and tell you that I am very tired of being poor. It's why I came here."

He could have asked her then whether she loved him—whether she were marrying him wholly for the faith she had in his ability to make money. But, as it was, her frankness stirred him more than another woman's declaration of undying passion. She was proud and, for him, she would trample her pride. She seemed to be placing her very life in his hands. She revealed for his eyes her secret mind. He did not know then that this revelation meant more to her than any other she might ever make, but only that the ivory statue breathed air. If he hadn't married her they could have been forever friends. Just as they were then, with her promise setting his longings at rest, and no scorn of him at all—there being no reason for scorn—and this fine logical clarity between them. If they could have stayed like that, suspended in space, and with no drip of time upon them, heaven could have opened. In heaven there was no marriage nor giving in marriage. Not that Martin ever quite believed in heaven.

You have your estimate of a person all made. A million incidents clamor to form that judgment, and every month and every year joins in its making. And then there is a silence of death or division, and perspective comes, bringing complete forgiveness or complete loathing. The loathing would be rare, and the forgiveness—in Martin's case, thinking of his wife, and having, he felt, so little to forgive—would be changed to an understanding such as this one, based on an hour such

as this, caught and held in memory. It was so clear in Martin's mind, this hour in the Lakes' library, he could pick it up whenever he willed and thumb it over like a book's pages. All his senses—not alone his sight—remained fresh for it. He could hear that precise and lovely speech weaving a thread above the faint sounds from distant rooms, and be startled anew by the breaking through of a log in the burning fire. Frances used a perfume, very slight—lavender, was it, or lilac?—and to his touch her hand was smooth and strong. She was strong throughout—always strong—and she looked as though she would break at a touch.

Martin, looking back at his whole concern with women, realized that it had ever held to a certain pattern. Fragility, yes, slenderness, even extreme—he had never cared for the redundant curve; but the weak and helpless never aroused him. There must be strength there to meet his own strength, in cogency if not in kind. It might be hidden, as in the woman who became his wife, or plain for all to see, as in the woman who became his son's wife, but it must be present. He could admire a face and figure merely pretty, but the vacuity of weakness intrigued him not. He did not remember such women. They were a slip, a diversion, ephemera of a day, to be used as casually as you might pick an after dinner mint from a bowl.

There would be nothing familiar to him about any of them, even if they were to enter this room where he now spent most of his waking hours. He would have to ask them who they were and what they wanted and how they had been permitted in the house—even if they were to appear here, not old, as they most of them would be, but young as he once had known them. They would clatter about on their high heels, a motley gathering arrayed—as they would be—in the fineries of varying eras, looking at him, and at one another, with the eyes of startled rabbits. Their presence might serve to amuse him for a little while—which was all, of course, that

their presence ever had served. He might press his concealed bell and have Eric bring them what refreshment the pantry afforded. And then he would press it again for Eric to usher them out. He might feel, from the compassion of age, a certain pity for them, though they would not need his pity, being unaware of any plight. One of them might come over and perch on the arm of his chair, and show him a bit of jewelry or a fur piece or a lace scarf, and tell him it was a gewgaw which he, in his generosity, had provided. He would take her word, but he wouldn't remember the thing. He wouldn't even remember the circumstances of its giving.

People would have been very much surprised at what Martin remembered and what he didn't. Now he was old and ill and his dressing gowns of camel's hair or silk hung loose over his devastated frame. But in his prime—his forties or fifties or his earlier sixties—he had been almost a cartoonist's example of Materialism—Capitalism—Predatory Wealth. A little handsomer, a bit more gracious, more genial—but, by those virtues, just so much more insidious and dangerous. He was what they called, in the later years at least, the Rugged Individualist. And he had traffic with trusts and mergers, and fought his way out of the coils and stood alone. He had had his hands on great fortune and emerged with fortune not so great, but with enough. Certain of his investments had been very sound, and his mills still rolled steel. And he sat here, in this room, which was a treasure house to make thieves' mouths water, and thought of a woman who, if she had died the day after she had promised to marry him, might have meant more to him than anything—more than the success to which she had contributed so much.

The success he was inclined to discount a little. What could success of the type he had had ever amount to? He hadn't made anything—he hadn't done anything—the world could have managed quite as well without his presence. Luck, that's what it was, and always the chance of the right associa-

tions at the auspicious moment. True enough, he had worked hard, but so did other men work hard. He had a way with people. So did other men. He was apt to know what you were thinking. There were niggers in Harlem who did that, and gazed into a crystal ball and charged you fifty cents. Up to recently he had been very strong. There were men in circuses who were stronger than he. He had had a certain imagination, always. A second rate poet had more. A writer of the trashiest fiction could open a door on a whole imaginary world, merely by pressing the keys of a typewriter. He could make men work. So could a prison guard. And what was all this, anyway? Not an end, not an accomplishment—merely a means. Merely why he had been successful—not an estimate of value.

He wished Axel Christiansen were alive. He would have liked to talk to Axel. Axel might know what there was about him. And he would at least come and see him, even though he had refused—one by one—all his offers. But the least Axel could do would be to join his own daughter in this big house, which was so empty now it was nothing but an invitation to ghosts. Oh, not real ghosts, who clanked chains at midnight, but ghosts Martin had conceived out of his mind by too much thinking.

He often rang for Eric, and made Eric sit down with him and bring out his funny old carved pipe. There was a special beer that Eric liked, a Danish beer rarely imported into this country. But it had been obtained somehow, and Martin would sip his bitter mineral water and Eric his beer, and they would talk. Eric was younger than Martin was, but he wasn't young. How many years was it now that Eric had been with him? Martin was always forgetting the exact number. Forty years, Eric said it was. And, in the course of them, he had saved up quite a comfortable little fortune.

"You ought to retire, Eric. It is not right that you should work when there is no need."

"And what should I do if I did not work? I have often thought I should like to go back to the old country, but Denmark is not the same now, sir—nothing on the other side is the same. This man, Hitler—"

"You mean Denmark is threatened?"

"Oh, no, sir, no—nothing like that—but, well, I should not care to go back. Besides, my work is here with you—that is my duty, looking after you. When a man renounces his duty, the grave cannot come too soon."

"You were a young fellow when you first came to me—I remember. You came as a sort of valet. Mrs. Lyndendaal thought I should have a valet."

"She was right, sir, wasn't she?"

"Was she ever wrong, Eric?"

"Not that I recall, sir."

Both men laughed. It was a gentle mirth, brought into being by many gentle memories of the dead woman's omniscience. In small ways, it was true that her judgments were infallible—ways that Eric would know about and ways that Martin could discuss with him.

"Forty years, Eric—that's a long time for doing your duty. Didn't there use to be a girl? You told me about her. She was a masseuse."

"Yes, we were fellow students in that school of massage you sent me to. But she went in for professional athletics and rose above me. She had chances to better herself and she took them."

"Where is she now?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, sir. I used to follow her career in the papers—she was a skater—and then I lost track. She's likely all right—settled down, very respectable. She became a great one for marrying men with money. You met her once."

"I don't recall—"

"Oh, you didn't know who she was—I mean, you didn't

know there was any connection between her and me. She was much afraid that you'd find out she knew your valet. I don't know how you would—I'd never have spoken. I said nothing, even when you told me about her. It was at one of the big fights at Madison Square Garden—the old Garden, not the new—some rich fellow had taken her there, though women didn't often go to fights in those days, and you were in the party. I remember it so well—I was rubbing you down after your bath, and you said you'd met a girl who was a skating champion—which of course she wasn't then—and you told me her name, which I'm not going to repeat even now. You said she had the most magnificent figure you'd ever seen, and a face like a rock pile—"

"Why, Eric—"

"That was all right, sir—her face wasn't pretty. But there was something in her face which made men think she would be what you say, in English, is 'hot stuff.' "

"Was she, Eric?"

"In a way, sir. But she'd rather have a diamond bracelet than a kiss any day in the week."

"And while you received a good salary—for a valet—it didn't run to diamond bracelets."

"No, sir."

"Tell me, Eric, didn't you ever think of trying to get ahead?"

"I thought of it when I was young, but it never went beyond thinking. I could have made plenty of extra money, on the side, if I'd wanted to."

"You mean, taken commissions on things you bought for me?"

"That, too, sir. What I really meant was something else. You remember that dirty scandal sheet that was always getting sued, and finally shut up shop? How do you think they got their news? Why, by paying men like me for it. I could have sold you very short if I'd wished to do so—you

talked to me quite freely at times—you still do, but it's different now. And there was a man who came around and offered me a regular salary for telling what I knew about you. That was when I began taking care of you in earnest. It was why I got to staying here so long, until at last it became a habit. If I'd left you, the valet who would have replaced me might have been tempted. The papers said enough about you in business, without having your private life dragged through the mud."

"You ought to have told me about that newspaper man, Eric—I'd have handled him!"

"Why should you, sir? You had troubles enough, without that. For many years you lived in the midst of them, though you never seemed to notice. I'm sure Mrs. Lyndendaal must have been worried sick about you."

"Possibly Mrs. Lyndendaal didn't know—"

"She knew a good deal. I always remember when Katie Marlin came to see her."

"And who was Katie Marlin?"

"You wouldn't remember her—not by name, sir. You must have had something to do with her briefly."

"Was that one of the things about which I talked to you so freely?"

"No, sir—I don't think you ever mentioned it. But there must have been something, because, a suitable time afterwards, this Katie Marlin had a child."

"She claimed it was mine?"

"Of course, sir."

"Strange, I don't recall—"

"I don't think she approached you in the matter."

"Whom did she approach?"

"Mrs. Lyndendaal. She came to see her, as I said, threatening to sue you for the child's support. If Mrs. Lyndendaal would pay her rather a sizable sum she would keep quiet."

"And where was I during all this?"

"I think you were in Omaha, sir—there was a mill there. Mrs. Lyndendaal never told you, did she?"

"Never. How did you know?"

"Mrs. Lyndendaal asked me to wait in the next room—she thought she might need me as a witness. She trusted me, and she always thought of things like that—had everything planned. I think she even planned to get the woman off her guard by talking to her easy and gentle, so she finally admitted there were half a dozen men she'd been having relations with. It might have been any of them. And then she opened the door, and there was I, sitting."

"So Katie Marlin left?"

"What else could she do? I showed her to the door myself. All the way down stairs she talked about having been tricked. Of course she'd been tricked! Mrs. Lyndendaal insisted upon giving me ten dollars. I didn't want to take it, and said I hoped it wasn't for keeping my mouth shut, as she must know I would do that anyway. But she said it was just for doing something outside my regular line of duty, and she would rather I'd take it. I can see how she felt—it kept me in my place."

This reminiscence didn't surprise Martin as much as it might have done. It was so much in line with what he knew of everyone concerned. This woman, whom Eric named as Katie Marlin, was a symbol of something in Martin's life which had no reality, no importance—and yet it had existed.

"I was a son-of-a-gun, wasn't I, in those days?"

"That was the general opinion, sir, though a great many people thought very highly of you."

"If Mrs. Lyndendaal could do those things for me, why couldn't she have done them for her son? He got in jams, too."

Eric took courage from his beer. "May I be frank, sir?"

"Haven't you been?"

"I mean, really frank."

"Of course—"

"Well, Mr. Julian was her son, her baby, she could deny him nothing. She spoiled him, if you recall—she would hear, or believe, no evil of him. And so she couldn't think straight where he was concerned."

"And, with me, there was no such interference?"

"No, sir. But you mustn't feel too badly about that, sir. Maybe, if Mrs. Lyndendaal had been a different sort of woman, she wouldn't have stood by you as she did. She'd have got all muddled and hysterical."

"I never remember her hysterical," said Martin, "even about Mr. Julian."

"Not on the surface, sir. She didn't believe in letting her feelings show. And now, sir, if you'll excuse me—" Eric rose. He must have realized, as Martin did himself, that this talk had gone far enough between master and man. He placed his empty beer mug neatly on a tray, knocked the contents of his pipe into an ashbowl, looked to see that the chair in which he had been sitting was not misplaced or guilty of a cushion creased. He added to the tray's burden Martin's mineral water and glass, and a number of other small objects not indigenous to the library. "I think I better take these things, sir. Mrs. Julian will be coming in from the office any minute now. I'll be back directly, and get you to your room and freshen you up."

"There's a woman for you, Eric!"

"Indeed, yes, sir. But never forget that Mrs. Julian was born in nineteen-one—makes a difference—she'd had everything her way—been free to use her abilities—"

"And Mrs. Lyndendaal wasn't free?"

"Not in the same way, sir." Before Eric left with his tray, there was one further comment he must make: "There's no woman come of Adam's rib can give a man everything there is to give. You should know that, sir."

"I should—"

Eric had the answer to everything—at least, to everything which came within his ken. It was as if he lived in a neat and cultivated garden, and knew the names of all the plants therein contained, and when they would blossom and when wither. Along the well-raked paths, he knew exactly where he was going, and his step was firm and light and sure. Martin did not live in such a garden—nor in any garden. He lived in a much vaster space, a space filled with forests and oceans and waste land where weeds grew. He stumbled, he fell, he lost his way. And, the more he thought about his life, the less the answers were fluent on his tongue.

Eric was a valet, and had taken advantage of his opportunities to become, also, a masseur. He had been a peasant lad, just such a one as Martin had been, come to America to make his fortune. He had made it by doing his duty for forty years, and had done nothing in all that time to shake his faith in himself. Martin's faith in himself—well—sometimes he wondered what the phrase meant . . .

Martin had been having a dream lately—one of those recurrent dreams. It is said that everything we ever see remains stored, as an image, in the subconscious mind. In Martin's case, the particular image, upon which the dream hung, must have remained so for some years, as it was at least that since he had ridden in the subway. He had never been a daily user of that means of transportation, but there was a sign there he had seen—a turnstile and a slot for nickels and the words—"Only Passengers with Exact Fare Enter Here"—In the dream he kept crowding his way towards this turnstile, and being barred from it by this sign. The sign grew till the letters were huge, and the oblong of sheet metal on which they were stenciled became a lethal weapon in invisible hands, striking him again and again. Bloody and bruised, he fought the thing, and was able—at last—to get a grip on it and bend it double, covering the message. Then he broke through the turnstile, crashing down the mechanism, and

hurtled forward into blackness. Eric would never dream so. He would always have the exact fare.

12

That Christmas—the Christmas of '91, it was—was an anniversary flavoring all other Christmases for Martin forever after. He had been in tight places before—difficulties at inns, in stokeholes, waterfront streets, distant countries—trouble in the mills, moments when it took all his nerve to hold his own among his present selection of peers.

But the family of Calverton had nothing to do with inns, nor stokeholes nor waterfronts nor mills. They were not men engaged, even as he himself, in working their way upwards. They were not foreign labor—either down-trodden or vociferous. In fact, in meeting and dealing with them, in withstanding their inspection, you had no gage, no measure to guide you. They were, to Martin, as wholly alien as though they had been Chinese or red Indians. And yet they looked at him with the eyes of Frances Calverton and something of her innate self-possession. They were fine-drawn as trotting horses. Their hands would be delicate and firm on a bridle or a trigger. And they might shoot or ride him down when their curiosity about him—present but veiled—was satisfied by the statement he had come to their house to make.

Because he must tell this man with the hawk's eyes and the lean body and the soft disarming speech that he had asked his daughter's hand in marriage, and that she had accepted him. There were two hounds lying at Gordon Calverton's feet. They would spring, Martin knew, at a sign or a word. Their lips, now pendulous and innocent, would stretch taut and menacing back from the sharp teeth, and their speed—bred for it as they were—would out-distance any flight that a man might circle. They would be familiar with every inch of

coal acreage possessed by their master, and intruders were their enemies. They would know every rabbit warren and every stone, and how the creeks wound and where the brush grew. And they would know this house, too, big as it was, and impressive as it still was, though lacking needed paint, and having little heat save that given by the great fireplaces where logs crackled. Martin had no doubt the roof leaked. But it wasn't raining this Christmas day, but clear and cold, and the cold wind rattled the window panes. The walls were thick. Their thickness formed nearly the width of a window seat where two boys sat, their feet and lower legs tucked beneath them, their clear young profiles silhouetted against the light. They were engaged in assembling and disassembling a small rifle—possibly a Christmas gift—and their absorption in the occupation was complete.

"My sons," said Mr. Calverton, waving a hand.

Obviously they were his sons, and the brothers of Frances. No women were visible. Martin had asked for Mr. Calverton, and Mr. Calverton he had been given.

"You came by the train from Pittsburgh, Mr. Lyndendaal?"

"Yes, sir, to Kendall. From there I obtained a carriage."

"Quite a drive, if you're not used to it."

"I didn't mind."

"You live in Pittsburgh?"

"Near by, sir."

"My daughter, Frances, arrived yesterday for the holiday. She said you would be calling. A long ways for a call."

"I'm accustomed to travel. I come, in the first place, from Denmark."

"I could judge you were a foreigner. I don't hold with them, mostly. Do you know a German named Lake?"

"Yes, sir. It was his grandfather who was German—"

"I was unaware he had one. Did he send you here?"

"No, sir."

"That's well. I have no high regard for him. He's ruined

the state of Pennsylvania with his coal mines and his coke ovens and his steel mills—he and Mr. Carnegie—they're both dangerous."

"I know that many people think them so," said Martin.

There was a slight movement at the door. That was when two more Calvertons came in. They were tall men and carried shotguns.

"My cousin Henry and my cousin John, Mr. Lyndendaal."

Henry and John bowed slightly. They moved forward silently, on the balls of their feet, as if to take game unawares. They sat down. They were oddly dressed in a sort of greenish buff, grown dull from the weather. Their coats were spotted with rusty stains, which were probably the blood of birds, but it gave Martin a start.

"How'd you make out?" asked Calverton.

"We bagged six. We gave 'em to Amanda. That can be enough—with what she has. Though they should be let to ripen."

"You'll join us for dinner, Mr. Lyndendaal?"

It was put in question form, but it wasn't a question, really. Though Martin preferred to treat it as such: "Thank you, sir. I was thinking of getting a bite at Kendall—at the hotel."

"What hotel?"

"There's a bar there." This from one of the cousins.

Martin would break bread with them, but first his situation must be clarified, no matter what the outcome. He reverted to his former denial: "Mr. Lake didn't send me."

Verification came from an unexpected quarter. The younger of the two boys had tired of his examination of the gun, and was looking at him gravely. He spoke: "Fan sent him. I heard her talking about him to Mother."

Mr. Calverton turned to his youngest child: "I didn't notice that anyone addressed you!" The reprimand was sharp and the boy subsided. Calverton turned back to Martin: "I suspicioned something of this sort," he said. "Well?"

All the clan held Martin with their eyes. Where was the rack and the torture chamber?

"I'd have come, even if your daughter hadn't sent me. It seemed fitting. We are to be married."

"I'd rather see her dead than married to a foreigner and a friend of Lake's!"

There wasn't time for that to sink, because a strange procession entered—more like a rescue party, perhaps. It numbered four people, one of them Frances. She was the second to appear. The first was an older woman, though not as old as she at first might seem. She walked by aid of a cane. Her limp was not too discernible. It was as if she would not limp. And you could not fancy Mrs. Calverton as ever doing that which she would not do. There was in the woman, always, a quality of unbroken spirit—and yet her life, as Martin learned later, had not been all in accordance with her wishes. She had fulfilled the one wish, of marrying Gordon Calverton, and she had paid for it, and been willing to pay. Her four living children were the survivors of others whose toughness of fibre had been insufficient for the stress of life and circumstance. Her limp was not congenital. In her girlhood she had been a great horsewoman, but her one accident had been serious.

Following Frances, was a pretty girl who looked eager and frightened at the same time. She was carrying a small tray with cakes on it. The fourth member of the cavalcade was a negro woman who carried a tray far from small. It held goblets and a silver bowl from which steam arose. Martin noted the bowl, which was magnificent, and also a gesture of hospitality, where before there had been only guns and blood-stained coats and hard eyes. All the men rose, including the small boys. Mrs. Calverton stepped out a little from the group in which Frances still remained. She offered Martin her hand.

"Mr. Lyndendaal, I believe? I hope my husband has in-

vited you to dine with us? You must be tired from your journey." She gave him a keen searching look. They liked each other at once.

"My wife," waved Calverton, as though grudgingly, "and my daughter, Emily."

The servant stood, holding the tray, and the two cousins, who had set down their shotguns, helped themselves to the punch, ladling it into the goblets. Frances stepped over to the bowl, filled a goblet and passed it to Martin. It was all the greeting between them.

Martin must answer Mrs. Calverton: "Yes, he has invited me. But now I do not know whether I should remain or not. Perhaps only long enough for your daughter to get her wraps."

"If she does that," said Calverton, "she need never come back!"

At this Mrs. Calverton turned away from Martin and towards the punch bowl. She signed to her younger daughter, who had set down the cakes. The girl filled a goblet and brought it to her. One hand carrying the liquor, the other on her cane, Mrs. Calverton crossed to her husband. The slight sound the cane made was clear in the silence. On Frances' face, normally pale, two red spots appeared, high on the cheek bones. The younger girl's eagerness and fright increased. Martin had seen that mixture of emotions on the faces of young sailors watching any exhibition of violence. But here no such show was in progress—merely a lame woman serving her lord and master with a Christmas draft.

"Drink your punch, Gordon."

He tossed it off. In spite of concerns seemingly more pressing, Martin took time to wonder how he did it. The Danes were not accounted weaklings when it came to drink, but this one would tax their prowess. It would have been fiery had it been cold, instead of steaming, as it was. He had wondered, too, why the women had not filled their own glasses. But this was no potion for women—and such little

women—every one of them small. And four such tall men about them—none under six-foot-plus. The drinking did not have the symbolism of peace, befitting the day. It was more a girding of the loins for combat.

Frances spoke: "It's a matter of complete indifference to me, whether I come back or not!"

With that glove tossed into the arena, every eye was on her.

"Take a good look at her while you may," said her father. "She's cast her lot with a gang of dirty foreigners, and she's no kin of ours!"

Now that he was old, Martin was frequently shocked—the world had become such a strange place now—but, in his youth, this reaction had not been usual to him. He was shocked at this, coming from Gordon Calverton. Dirty foreigners—it was not a phrase for such a man to speak. It reeked of brawl—the kind of insult he himself could hurl with good effect when his occasions demanded—but was not for the lips of the nobility.

"She'll be well seen to," said Martin.

Mrs. Calverton addressed her daughter: "Have a care for your father's heart, Frances—"

The remark had not been a chronic or casual warning. Something was happening to Gordon Calverton. His skin, normally ruddy from sun and wind, was deepening in tone, almost as though his entire face, and what was shown of his neck, had been dipped in a dye vat. It was anger that so flooded him—anger at his daughter and anger at Martin. Martin was glad none of the three weapons the room visibly held were in instant reach. The man was capable of any act of fury.

"Watch out there—" This from one of the cousins. Martin wasn't sure whether the warning was to him or to his self-appointed enemy. But Martin was all right. If he was going to be in a fight, he was going to be in a fight, and if he was to be outnumbered three to one, there was very little—at this

late date—he could do to change the odds. He felt better than he had been feeling. He felt more at his ease. He finished his drink and put the goblet down.

“I’m very tired of having a care for my father’s heart,” Frances answered her mother. Martin had never heard her speak with a more exquisite precision.

Her voice was unaffected by any stress. The anger was all back of it, all held in check, and the more deadly for that. It was so deadly that it filled the room for Martin, even though it was not directed at himself. It was an anger more than adequate for the two of them to feel, towards this man who had insulted them both. For Martin, of course, the situation was new. For her, it must have been a repetition of scenes that had taken place in this room many times. The vista of them would stretch back and strain her power to withstand strain.

“Your father’s ill,” said Martin. And then, to Calverton—“I’m sorry, sir, that I’m so objectionable to you.”

Calverton was swaying on his feet. Martin had a mind to put out his hand to steady him, but the gesture might be misinterpreted. The servant had set down the punch and its accoutrements and gone out. One of the cousins stepped forward. He brought a chair over.

“Sit down, Gordon—”

“Not—here—” Calverton managed to say. It was obviously difficult for him to speak. Though whether this trouble of articulation was from the heart they must have a care for, or from the anger they must brook, Martin didn’t know. The one, doubtless, was joined with the other. A man would have a very useful weapon, and no real need of guns, who could display a state like this whenever things were not to his liking.

Mrs. Calverton again addressed her daughter: “You knew this would be likely to happen, Frances. It seems to me that it might have been arranged differently.” And, to Martin—“I really think you better go.”

For a moment there, Martin was inclined to agree with her. He often thought of that moment. It was like a hole in the spell that Frances had cast over him—a hole through which he might have stepped. Mrs. Calverton liked him, and he was sure she didn't mean what his immediate going would have meant. But it wouldn't have been for her to piece things together. No one could have done that, if he'd left, leaving Frances behind him. The girl stood there, looking at her father, and it was plain that any affection she might ever have had for the sick man was completely drained. It was rather horrible to Martin, seeing her so, with no pity in her. But as she turned from her vigil, and looked at him, the spell of her came flooding back. He couldn't leave—not without her.

"If you'll get your things, Frances, I'll wait outside. The man who brought me over is still there." Then he explained to Mrs. Calverton that they could be married to-night.

"You were invited to Christmas dinner," said Frances. "After that, we'll see."

The cousins had Gordon Calverton into his chair at last. He was gasping, making odd convulsive gestures, and his face was still that deep color. Breath came heavily. But Martin, lacking all medical knowledge, was not concerned with symptoms. What he was concerned with, was the curious shift which had taken place—a shift in rulers. Calverton was no longer master. He was being tended, watched, fed water from a cup one of the boys had brought, the letter of solicitude was being observed well enough by his sons and his cousins and his wife. They were the clan. The clan head was disabled, disqualified. The state of royalty was immortal. A command was needed. It was Frances who gave it.

"Take him to his room and call a doctor."

One of the tall cousins answered: "My mare's in the shed. I'll ride over—if you'll keep a bird for me."

"Surely, Cousin John, we'll keep a bird for you."

"You'll give me a hand here first," said the other of the two.

Between them, they picked up the sick man, one supporting his legs and the other his shoulders. Martin's last view of him was distorted and upside down. His head was hanging downwards, his staring eyes—one pupil contracted smaller than its mate—dangerously close to the floor. The floor was bare and wide-beamed and not too smooth. Mrs. Calverton followed them out. She, in turn, was followed by the pair of hounds, padding softly.

At the door, she spoke to her daughter, Emily: "You can tell Amanda not to wait for me. The dinner's in the oven and it best be served."

The girl went out through a door not previously used. The older boy had gone over to the punch bowl and had dipped himself a half goblet full, hoping he wouldn't be noticed. His hope was vain.

"I wouldn't do that," Frances told him.

"No," said Martin, "you wouldn't like it."

The child retired, somewhat sullenly, to the window seat and the rifle.

"It's very nice punch," Martin went on, having to say something. "What's it made of?"

"Corn, I fancy."

"Corn?"

"Haven't you ever tasted corn liquor? You *are* a foreigner, aren't you? A dirty foreigner." Frances shrugged a little, as if it didn't matter now—and it didn't. "And then there's tea in it, and possibly a little brandy, and claret and spices. I've never made it myself. I think I might have a little—under the circumstances—and you, also. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked you to come. I didn't know it would be as bad as this—that Father would have one of his fits—"

"We can be married at once—"

"Why should we be? I'm not a fugitive from justice, or

a girl you've picked up in the course of your wanderings. I want a proper wedding!"

She was engaged with the punch, and spoke to him over her shoulder. She could have anything she wanted. He was watching the line of her straight-set shoulders, and how her throat rose from them, clear and fine. He would have picked her up anywhere he had found her—on the streets of some seaport such as Marseilles, for instance, where his ship had once touched. Martin's most vivid recollection of this particular port was, aptly enough, sight of a beggar who had indulged in a paroxysm even more showy than the one he had just witnessed, hoping to get a franc for it. But Frances Calverton wandered no quays. She had the right connections, a term used to Martin by Lake himself in outlining choice of a wife. "A girl's family can sometimes do a great deal for a young man—" And Frances, later: "Mr. Lyndendaal must think my family very strange people—"

They were, to Martin, everything the adjective implied, and yet he would marry her with or without their consent—a consent it would seem now would be unimportant. A proper wedding, indeed! Why not? Chanting, and the deep tones of an organ, and young girls throwing rose petals . . .

Cousin Henry re-entered the room, and presently Emily, still frightened, still eager.

"How is he?" Frances asked.

"Not so good," said Henry. "Your mother's with him—she's having some dinner brought up to her."

"We'll all be having dinner soon."

Martin, washing his hands in the room where the oldest boy had been charged with escorting him, felt as though he were being cleansed for an inexorable ceremony, fated to take place, its hour unpierced by fortune's arrows. At a time less preoccupied, that room would have held his curiosity. For use of the wash bowl, a turtle must be dis-

possessed. A cage housing squirrels swung from the ceiling. The faintly rancid odor came from some belated—too belated—inquiries into the anatomy of a defunct frog. Collections of stones, plants and birds' eggs occupied some roughly made pine-wood shelves, and—just in case you should think the arts ill represented—one entire wall was hung with tapestry.

Martin didn't know then that this faded, and somewhat moth-eaten, piece of weaving was a very fine example of early Flemish work, and represented Alexander the Great defeating the Persian king, Darius. It was years later that he spent a considerable sum on its repair, and was able to dispose of it for young Gordon Calverton at a price even more considerable. The boys would have shown him treasure not immediately on display, such as boxes of Indian arrowheads and some deer's antlers which had been broken, and therefore thrust under the bed. But there was no time for such. The younger boy passed a remark which should have cast more light than it did cast on the cloud which—again—should have hung over them more than it did hang:

"I hope Cousin John finds the doctor home. You remember what the doctor said, last time he came?"

"Shut up, Jack!"

"I won't shut up! He said, 'Mr. Calverton, you're a doomed man, and you better conduct yourself according.' Mr. Lyndendaal, what's a doomed man?"

"I've no idea," said Martin, drying his hands.

"I know—nobody'll tell me."

"Jack better shut up," again commented the young Gordon. "Fan wouldn't like his asking questions of her intended."

They returned to the living room presently, where the girls and Cousin Henry were awaiting them. The same negress who had carried the punch bowl came in and announced the much discussed feast. Frances took Martin's

arm and led him in to it. The birds were not cooked enough for Martin's taste. But Cousin Henry made about them the opposite criticism, also finding them too fresh—a matter of which he had spoken before. He had availed himself well of the punch and his tongue was loosened. As the only grown man present of the clan, he was inclined to take command over from Frances. However, he didn't seat himself in the vacant chair at the table's head—one of three chairs so vacant.

This Christmas fell on a Friday. It developed he was a Catholic, and if it hadn't been a feast day he would have had to confine himself to fish. He discussed the Church and the State and the game laws and horse racing—in fact every good and safe topic. About the man upstairs nothing was said, or of the plans of Martin and Frances. The nearest that anyone came to that was Frances' assurance to Martin that the man and horse, through whose services he had arrived, were being cared for. A flaming pudding replaced the meat course. These people evidently fed on flame. The pudding was excellent, once its fires were quenched.

"They have a king in Denmark, don't they?" Cousin Henry inquired of Martin. That was a safe topic, too.

"Yes, Christian the Ninth."

"This country makes a big mistake, not having a king. If General Washington had been made king—but he didn't have any sons. You've got to have sons to be a king."

"With a president I suppose sons don't matter," Martin said. He had to say something.

"With a president nothing matters. Politicians—that's all they are."

"I thought Americans were very proud of their democracy."

"Democracy—hell! There ain't no such thing."

Martin thought that was putting it a little strong, and said so. "It depends on what you mean by democracy. What

it means to me is a chance to rise—and, in this country, I have it. In Europe it would take a hundred years or more to get things which I can get here in ten. There a man works hard, grows modestly prosperous, hands on to his children a little more than he had—the children improve their condition still more—in a hundred years the family may amount to something. Here, the opportunities are much greater and the gates are open much wider.”

“That’s true,” said Frances. “And here the gates are open both ways—in and out.”

It was the last thing Frances said as she rose from the table, followed by Emily and the boys. Martin rose, as did Cousin Henry. He would have followed, too, but the other man motioned him back. “Why not set a bit? There’s nothing not to set for. Besides, I’d like to have a good close look at the fellow Fan’s picked for herself.”

Fan’s cousin reached for his hip pocket and, for a moment, Martin thought it would be the last look anyone would ever have at him. But instead of a pistol, Henry brought forth a flask.

“Try some o’ that. It’s about as fine corn as ever wet a gullet. That punch in there is kinda weak—messed up with this and that. This is the pure article.”

Martin had no wish for the pure article. In fact, he was particularly anxious to keep sober, but he drank. He would keep sober anyway, if he set his mind to it. “Yes, I can see it’s pure.” He had never tasted the contents of Captain Jones’s mixer. This was a different color—hardly any color at all—and thinner, but otherwise doubtless much the same. “Where do you get it?”

“Get it—hell! I make it—right on my place, a stretch east of here. Near Meadow Mountain. John and I—we’re bachelors. Fan thinks we don’t amount to much. But we raise a few horses and make out.”

“You make liquor—”

"That's just private. Fan's ambitious. A couple o' years back, when she came over from Paris, I had a kind of a yen for Fan and asked her to marry me. She turned me down, and I guess I'm a sight more comfortable than I would 'a' been if she hadn't. If a man don't marry before he's thirty, he gets set in his ways, and a woman—one like her—can be considerable nuisance. Besides, we're cousins, and the Calverton line is drawn a bit fine as it is. I know enough about stock breeding to know that."

"You'll get married some of these days—" Martin could afford the condescension of the successful rival.

"If I do, I reckon I'll look for a bit more poundage. All the Calverton women are so thin you have to shake the sheets to find 'em."

Martin laughed. "That's one way of putting it!"

He found his glass filled again, and he couldn't ignore a filled glass—not in the company of this cousin, who was evidently trying to be friendly. Frances was quite right about him—he didn't amount to much. And she was right, too, in what she had said—the gates of this extraordinary country of opportunity were open both ways, in and out. Cousin Henry was on his way out. You could tell that, by his speech and his clothes, and almost everything else about him. And yet, in Europe, Martin wouldn't have been sitting at the same table with him—at least not yet.

"Skaal!" said Martin, raising his glass.

"The same to you."

"I understand," said Martin, "that there's coal on this property."

"Plenty of it, but Gordon won't sell. Now, his wife, she doesn't feel that way. She comes from New York—doesn't like it here—never has. She and Fan would move out of here so quick, if they got the chance, you couldn't see 'em going!"

"I'll say. This man Lake offered fifty thousand dollars—but I guess it's worth that, for coal. They say Lake's a shrewd trader."

"How much land have they got?"

"Upwards of a thousand acres."

"That's fifty dollars an acre," said Martin. "Yes, Mr. Lake's a very shrewd trader."

"It would surprise the rabbits some if they started digging for coal here. But Gordon won't sell."

"That's too bad."

There was a stir outside. Both men turned towards the sound. A man—a stranger to Martin—was standing in the door. He wasn't thin, like the Calvertons, but heavy set in feature and body. Henry greeted him—"Hello, Doc—didn't know you'd come yet. This is Mr. Lyndendaal—Dr. Pepperill—"

"How do you do?"

"How do you do?"

The doctor, greetings over, addressed himself to Henry: "They want you upstairs."

Henry finished his drink and rose. "Sure. Gordon eased up any?"

"Yes, he's eased up."

Something odd in the doctor's tone struck Martin. "You mean, he's all right?"

It hadn't been his business to ask questions, and the doctor looked him over as though an answer might not be forthcoming. But it was. "I mean, he died about five minutes ago."

"My God—"

"They say he got mad at someone—you, I guess. But if it hadn't been you, it would have been someone else, sooner or later. I told him, a long time ago, he just naturally couldn't take a chance on getting mad."

"I had no idea," said Martin, "no idea at all—"

"Don't let it cut your sleep, thinking about it," the doctor said.

"I won't."

Henry had gone upstairs, but Dr. Pepperill lingered. His eye fell on the half emptied flask. "I could do with a drink there."

"Oh—help yourself—"

"Thanks."

"Don't thank me. It's not my liquor, nor my house."

The doctor poured himself a measure. "I fancy this place will be for sale now. And that'll be easy, because they've had an offer."

"Too damned easy!"

From the man's inquiring look, it was clear he didn't quite catch the sense of this. But he could hardly have been expected to know how easy everything had been for Martin. Everything had come Martin's way—always—and now it seemed that death itself was working in his interests. Death and chance and all the rest. It was a little too much. It made him a little sick at his stomach.

13

In appraising this particular period of his life, it seemed to Martin that his own personal concerns, his private as apart from his business interests, were somewhat over-emphasized. Though perhaps this was merely an emphasis of memory. These concerns were still vivid to him, and important, and his work—which must have been important at the time—had been more lightly etched in his retentive brain cells. Sometimes the two sides of his life came together, as in the matter of the coal acreage, and in other ways almost as direct. After all, it was Jonathan Lake himself who had been instrumental in supplying him with a wife.

It was Jonathan Lake who offered him one of the numerous "debtor partnerships" in the Carnegie Steel Company, now being formed, and it was this wife—or rather this wife-to-be, because the matter came up shortly before their marriage—who made him refuse it.

"What do you want to be a partner for?" she had said. "You'll be tied then, hand and foot. But the Company won't be tied—they can let you out at a moment's notice. Be your own man. You're not buying into the thing with your own money—if you were, the case would be a little different—your interest will be paid for with the money they make on you."

"It's an honor."

"I don't care for it."

"My refusal might not be popular."

"You're much too concerned with being popular!"

She was right, as Eric and Martin, in later years, agreed among themselves she usually had been. It was she, also, who made Lake pay a hundred thousand dollars for the coal acreage, instead of the fifty he had originally offered. In an expansive moment over coffee and cigars, Lake admitted to Martin that he rather regretted his introduction of a certain young lady into the inner fastnesses of Steel.

"Before she arrived I had things more or less my own way—"

Nevertheless, he and Mrs. Lake made her a wedding present of a watch so incrustated with diamonds that you could hardly see the time it measured. She liked the watch. She didn't greatly admire the pair of silver vases which was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rosch, though she admitted they'd be useful for flowers. The great Carnegie himself contributed a large rug, woven on Scottish looms in a design of gorse and heather—green with clusters of the pink flowers. "Very nice," Frances commented, "if one had a cottage—" Years later, it was very nice on the nursery floor. It still existed, some-

what worn and faded, in some upper region of Martin's house. He supposed it a symbol of something—something which had never existed, perhaps.

They were married at the end of March, the Calverton mansion being kept intact for that purpose. It was a quiet wedding, owing to the recent death, but a proper one, and the bride wore her grandmother's wedding veil. There was a quality of spring about, the improvised altar was massed in wild flowers, and the cold winds Martin remembered were replaced by mild and sun-drenched breezes.

Axel Christiansen was his cousin's best man, looking very distinguished—as Martin had known he would—in the new striped trousers and Prince Albert coat the New York tailor had been ordered to make for him. Axel was well liked by everyone. Cousin Henry gave the bride away. Instead of an old shooting jacket, he wore a frock coat of ancient vintage, but still good. The Lakes were present, Lake admiring the house and regretting that the exigencies of coal mining would force him to demolish it the following week. Mrs. Calverton and Emily were moving to New York, the boys to boarding school. It was too bad that Aunt Clem couldn't come back from Paris, but she had sent Frances some bridal finery of an intimate nature and her very best wishes. Everyone present was on his very best behavior. You would not have thought it possible that a scene of any violence had ever taken place there. Even the fiery punch was replaced by champagne, which Cousin Henry confidentially told Martin was about as strong as soda pop. A few close relatives of Mrs. Calverton's came down from New York. They meant nothing to Martin. They evidently meant a great deal to Mrs. Lake. Martin was aware that his personal stock had risen beyond any reason.

But nothing had any reason to-day—nothing was what it seemed. Everyone was engaged in putting on a show. That

was why everything was so perfect. Mrs. Calverton, in crisp black, was so gracious and so smiling, but you didn't know what she was thinking. This house, so soon to perish, was flying all its flags. Why, it didn't even belong to the Calvertons any more! Everything was like that—of the moment—and it didn't seem of the moment. Only the mining machinery which dotted the more distant landscape seemed temporary in structure or use, and this would remain long after the house was razed and the grounds flattened. There was a horde of servants that had all the air of old family retainers. Martin happened to know that they had come from Baltimore for the occasion. They would return that night by the same train which would take back the organ now installed in the hall. And all this because Martin had seen a woman whom he must possess.

Cousin Henry had said that the rabbits would be surprised when the digging for coal started. But the rabbits had not been warned of change. Of all the changes which had followed each other in sequence swift and logical, Martin himself had been warned, and was largely responsible for. Yet he was surprised, too—more than the rabbits would be, having within himself a greater capacity for wonder. Long before that stormy November evening when he had entered a pool of warmth and light and beheld Frances, had changes come to him. With his father's drowning it had started, and then Axel and then the inn, and then the stoke-hole. His rise at the mills, and new clothes—that was important—and the family of Lake. And here was Axel now, suave, amusing, distinguished, showing this new world that Martin had cousins, too. Saying nothing about his own imminent marriage to a cook, as the subject had not arisen. And here was Lake, greatly impressed, though he could have bought and sold everybody present, and not known the difference—Lake with his trim beard and his neat custom-

made boots, and his eyes that were often half closed, but could open to pierce through to the marrow of any man or any problem.

Martin had worked in Pittsburgh for four years. Four years were nothing as success is reckoned, and his progress would have been miraculous, save that there were other men in Pittsburgh—Rosch, for example—whose progress had been equally so. He was one of a group in everything except this one thing, this marriage he was in the act of making, which placed him—for reasons he didn't wholly understand—above almost everyone. Some door had opened for him which hadn't opened for them. In all his later life, Martin had never figured it out to his satisfaction. He lived in the United States for a great many years. He would undoubtedly die in it. And even on the day of his death, there would be valuations he wouldn't understand. It was easy to say that the United States was a very odd country, and let it go at that. Martin didn't want to let it go, and yet he had to. Europe he knew, but Europe was simpler. Europe had now got itself into an unholy mess, but still it was simpler. And there were those vast Asiatic countries, and others not so vast, but important, too.

Sitting here in his library, with most of life behind him, Martin decided that the whole world was a very strange place for a man to think about. You couldn't get anywhere with such thinking. Possibly some of the books which lined the walls would hold answers to all the questions. Most of them Martin had never read. And he doubted very much if the wisdom of the ages would be therein contained. Besides, reading bored him. He would much rather sit and think about himself, and play a desultory hand of solitaire and talk to Eric, and Benison perhaps, and wait for Martha to come home from the office. He even welcomed the visits of old Charlie Rosch, who was a lonely old man now just like himself. Charlie had moved into an apartment since

his wife had died—one of those places with the bedrooms below and the living rooms above and a fence around the thirtieth story. You could step out on a terrace and watch the factory lights in Long Island City, and in the daytime you could watch the prisoners on Welfare Island. Charlie's art collection had been given to a museum, and his fortune had shrunk a good deal, just as Martin's had. But Charlie could walk. He was hale and hearty, even if he was nearly eighty, and allegedly still involved with that opera singer of his—she couldn't be so young now, herself—but he was a lonely old man, just the same. He, with Martin, was part of that scrap heap of obsolescence to which their generation had been so largely relegated. The times had changed, and they hadn't changed with them—not sufficiently.

The world continued to go on. It was going on now with a gathered speed during this late summer—what was the year—nineteen-thirty-nine?—and Martin and Charlie Rosch were not going on with it. To them, of late, so very little had really happened. It was almost as if there had been introduced beneath them a plate of some substance capable of intercepting gravitational attraction, so that they alone, in the midst of all this turmoil, remained wholly without motion. The world had lost all power to hurt them. The effort—the tremendous effort—of living was, for them both, nearly over. There was a radio in Martin's library. He rarely had it turned on. He didn't want to listen to all the talk. So much talk. A general European war was threatened. People who should know said it couldn't possibly be avoided if Hitler invaded Poland. And last month—July, it had been—this was August—President Roosevelt asked for the repeal of the arms embargo. These matters would have meant a great deal to Martin in the past. They meant much less now. This was the end of a period, and he would end with it. So would Charlie Rosch. What came after would not be of their devising, which in itself made a bond between them.

It was hard now for Martin to realize that Rosch and his wife hadn't even been asked to the wedding!

But no one had, except relations and the Lakes. In such a small wedding, you had to draw a very distinct line. And yet it seemed so big a show for a handful of people. Cousin Henry had the right idea. "I have a horse to ride," he told Martin, "a gun to shoot, and a nigger to cook my meals. What more can a man want?"

Well, he admitted to having wanted Frances. And he was treating not getting her far more philosophically than Martin would have done. That was the trouble with Martin—he'd wanted too much. And got it, too, or most of it. It would be dangerous for him to wish for the sun, because any undue approach of that planet would burn the earth up. Yes, Martin was too acquisitive, and his acquisitions had proved too much for him, bringing in their train little but disappointment and frustration, and a bitter taste in the mouth. Not that some of them hadn't been worth having. Well worth having, as in the case of Frances, his wife. Even when he discovered that in what, for him as a young man, was the most important sense, Frances didn't love him—and never would—he didn't regret having married her. She would never love him, not for all his patience and his hope, and his impatience and his unrestrained and headlong passion for her, which she accepted passively and graciously, holding back her scorn and her distaste. This sense of love could not be the most important, for she must have cared about him a great deal, to have made up to him in every other thing for what she could not do.

He became a rich man, and she a rich man's wife. But so are many other women rich men's wives, and take their good fortune for granted and make no attempt to pull their weight in the boat. He hadn't been so easy to get along with. Their life hadn't been so easy—not during those first years. They were married the end of March, and that same spring

there began to be trouble in the mills—serious trouble. It wasn't anything sudden, anything they didn't know about in advance, not that it didn't seem sudden when the trouble really broke.

At Homestead there was an agreement with the labor unions, which was due to expire in July. After that, the powers-that-were wanted to run the plant non-union. But the unions were gaining in influence, and so this wouldn't be so simple. Mr. Carnegie tried to arrange matters amicably. Dreading failure—possibly foreseeing it—and not wishing to be personally involved, he sailed for Europe, leaving everything to Lake. Lake had always been high-handed in his relations with labor. He was high-handed now. Some of the union demands were undoubtedly unreasonable. They demanded too many men on a job—more, sometimes, than the job justified. Terms were made, and rejected on both sides. There was much cabling from Carnegie. After all, the little Scotchman must do the best he could for labor. He had designed a crest for himself, with a weaver's cap, and a coronet upside down surmounted by a liberty cap—underneath, the motto—DEATH TO PRIVILEGE—TRIUMPHANT DEMOCRACY.

Martin was deputed to conduct negotiations with an advisory committee of labor. Then, as these negotiations were tending towards success, Lake stepped in and threw out the settlement Martin was pretty sure he was on the point of making. The two men came near to quarrel. But at that time Martin was in no position to quarrel with Lake. He must think of himself, and carry out Lake's orders as best he could. That was the test of a man—being able to carry out orders he didn't agree with. The trouble came closer. There were minor disturbances. Effigies were burned—even one of Martin himself, of such stuff is fame made—a hose was turned on an employee from Lake's office. An order came through to the superintendent of Homestead to

roll a large lot of plates ahead, which could be finished should the work be stopped for a time. Martin didn't like it. And he kept thinking how, if left to himself and given the proper authority, he could have found ways to avoid at least the worst features of the great strike. But he wasn't left to himself, and Lake refused him such authority.

Martin had had everything his own way, and now, almost for the first time, he didn't. He had been geared to victory, and now victory had made use of its attendant wings. But he was strong, and certain forces in him which, in victory, had lain dormant, began to stir. Often his enthusiasm had carried him along. Now he must function without enthusiasm. Having things his own way, he had never had to adapt himself. Now he must be adaptable day and night—not only at work, but at home. He was like a cat who, finding his favorite chair preempted, considers for a moment and finds another chair. At some time during those months Martin's youth was over.

At Braddock, where Charlie Rosch was, there was no trouble. Martin envied Rosch, who swam with the stream, and took life as it came—or so it seemed. Rosch was Martin, with seven league boots. It was as if the necessity for struggle were not in him. Martin might have stayed at Braddock, too—under Rosch. But the great Lake had sent for him. Lake was always sending for people and telling them what to do. He was a little man with a bad stomach. This summer, what with the heat and the trouble, his stomach was particularly bad. Mrs. Lake was very much worried about his condition. He lived on barley gruel and raw eggs. He didn't live, as many men might have done—regardless of stature—in fear of his life. It wasn't for his own protection that he had a lodge-keeper and an iron gate and a high brick wall. It was for the protection of his family. Because he himself walked out unconcerned and unguarded. There was almost an insolence about the chances he took, as though

only a silver bullet could penetrate his heart. He had guts, Lake had. Even the thirty-eight hundred employees of Homestead, who all hated him, admitted that of him.

Of this number, little more than a thousand were native born, and there were nearly a thousand who didn't speak English. They were in the mass, their power in the mass they formed. Their leaders used this power, having little of their own. The men could be divided into two main groups, the skilled and the unskilled. The interests of these groups were wholly different. The skilled men would never have fought the Company at all, if left to themselves, or if weaned away gently from the subversive unions. This was natural enough. The higher up a man got—the greater his chance of rising further—the more he had a tendency to join forces with the men who had risen, thinking of himself and his future as being allied to the Company. That was the way Martin figured it, as Martin was a skilled man, and knew how such men thought. Lake didn't know. He had always been an employer, and could therefore see only the employer's side.

Martin remembered that day aboard ship, standing with Axel and looking at the men in the steerage. That was the mass, the useful mass, now risen to power and destruction. There were animals like that, weak inferior animals who always must travel in a herd because, only in a herd, could they find protection from their enemies. But that the weak should find protection didn't seem to Martin the first aim of industry.

He knew what the wage scale was for unskilled labor. At that time it was low, and the hours were long. And he knew that the Company could afford to raise the scale and shorten the hours. They wouldn't lose by it in the long run, either. And the company-owned houses where the men lived were pretty disgraceful. That he knew, too. There'd be less sickness if they were cleaned up a bit. Not that they'd stay

clean, most of them. Not that these men, or their families, knew how to live decently. And, as for conditions in the mills themselves, they'd been devised for profit rather than safety. Steel making was admittedly a hazardous occupation. When human life was cheap, human life was occasionally sacrificed. It was sacrificed even when it wasn't cheap. Look at the tragedy of Captain Jones. The way these union leaders talked, you'd think the unions were all set to bring about some sort of millennium!

Martin had known a number of leaders during the course of his life. Some of them were very clever. But the cleverer they were, and the higher they rose in power and importance, the less they represented the interests of unskilled labor. What they really wanted was power and importance for themselves, just the same as any man would, who had the stuff in him from which such assets spring. Martin knew this now. He wasn't sure he'd known it then.

Of course he knew a great many things now which he hadn't known in the year 1892. In fact, he often looked back on that year, as he did on the earlier ones of his Pittsburgh period, with a certain awe. How he'd lived through it, and emerged with a whole skin, he classed as a miracle unsuited to an age when there are no miracles. Again, if at the time he had realized his danger, his courage would have faltered. He might have been killed on any one of a number of occasions. He might have found himself wholly repudiated by Lake and Carnegie, and by everyone who had any claim on his success or failure. He might have gone from the first to the second in one easy descent, and never been able to pick himself up.

Another thing which might have happened, too . . . He might, in the annals of labor, have become so identified with the enemy that it would have forever blocked his own personal dealings in that direction. And the success of such dealings was very valuable to him in the years to come. But,

in the years to come, he was free to deal as he pleased. Lake refused to recognize the unions. In fact, he never recognized them. Martin not only recognized them, he patted them on the back. In later years, he was accused of catering to them. He even publicly gave them full credit for all the bettered living conditions of the twentieth century. And he didn't really believe that. How could he, with the Rockefeller millions and the Carnegie millions, and all the other millions, pouring into funds and foundations and great hospitals and institutions of learning and medical research? But the proof of the pudding was in the eating, and whatever he believed or he didn't believe, he'd survived. He'd survived strikes and panics and wars and depressions. He'd survived the income tax and a titled son-in-law and the first and second Roosevelts. But, most of all, he'd survived that spring and summer of the year eighteen hundred and ninety-two.

On July 1st the Homestead works were closed. Both sides organized for war. Homestead was in possession of its workmen, and not a wheel turned. The great mill was used as a barracks, a fort. No outsider was admitted, no officer nor representative of the Company. And on the night of July 5th two barges, heavy laden, were towed by a tug boat up the Monongahela River. Martin was sitting with the captain in the tug boat wheelhouse. He didn't like it at all. They passed Lock Number 1, three miles below Homestead, just as the sky was growing less black than it had been. From Homestead a siren shrieked. The river was suddenly filled with small boats. Missiles were hurled, shots fired. An armed mob kept pace with the progress of the barges up the river. Then the mob got ahead of the barges, crashed through the fence surrounding the plant, and was waiting when the tug boat arrived at the dock. Loaded on the barges, along with ammunition, bedding and provisions, were three hundred special operatives of the Pinkerton De-

tective Agency. They'd been hired by the Company to serve as watchmen at the plant. At least, that was the theory of it.

Martin's position was both definite and official. He'd been sent by Lake to meet this troop at Ashtabula, escort them by train to a point where they could be transferred to their present means of transport, and land them finally at Homestead. The greatest secrecy must be preserved. It was a mission delicate and dangerous. Martin had sensed that if he refused to undertake it Lake would be through with him forever.

Well, he'd brought the men down. He'd done what he'd been told. But he didn't fancy the idea of being seen by the Homestead men, sitting there on the tug boat. It wasn't a question of being shot at, or blown up, though he didn't fancy that either. It lay deeper. These were his men—his children—and he was fighting them with weapons not of his own choosing. They would never be expected to understand that he had so to fight, or himself perish. The tug boat was docking. Martin turned suddenly to the captain.

"I'm going into the engine house for a while."

"Go ahead."

It wasn't very light yet, and Martin reached the engine house without being seen. There was nothing mysterious to Martin about an engine house—even of a tug boat. He knew his way about there.

"Can you swim?" he asked the fireman.

"Sure!"

"Would twenty dollars make you swim to the other side of the river?"

"Sure!"

"Here—"

"Thanks—"

"Wait a minute. I'm buying your clothes. You're a big fellow, and I can wear 'em."

Martin was wearing, as he now noticed, a rather old blue suit. He hadn't had it off for two days, so it looked older than it was. It was one of the two first blue suits that he'd ever had made for himself. He gave the man the trousers. All the rest of his garments he rolled in a bundle with a piece of lead pipe and dropped overboard.

In the middle of the morning the tug boat cast off its tow line and took some wounded Pinkerton men up the river to a hospital. It was rather pleasant, being in an engine room again. Martin was happier than he'd been in some time, watching the gauges, keeping the fire up, fussing about as though he owned the place. And it wasn't so bad, coming back to the scene of the warfare, with rifle fire popping all about. But it was too much for the captain, evidently. He decided to leave. They steamed back down the river. It was hours later that Martin was discovered.

"Where in hell's my fireman?"

"He said he could swim," said Martin.

"And where did you learn to keep the steam up in a boiler?"

"Lots of places," said Martin.

They both laughed, and Martin went on laughing, thinking what his wife would say if she could see him now. His wife, in a trailing white dress, sitting on the porch of the cottage they had hired in East Liberty, or moving about the parlor, arranging flowers, or resting in the big bedroom upstairs that caught all the breezes, east and south. His wife didn't feel very well. She was in the earlier stages of bearing a child.

It has been said of the Danes that they weep neither for their sins nor for their dead. Martin was a Dane, and it wasn't weeping that occupied him when he thought about

his sins. It was more like a sort of abstract inquiry, flavored with a tincture of surprise. He was a little painfully aware that, at seventy-three, you could hardly be fair to sin. No sin could then seem worth the trouble. But he had been detecting in himself a disturbing tendency to pass judgment on his own acts, and true judgment must ever come from without, rather than from within. It was doubtful, thought Martin, if God Almighty was capable of passing sentence on Himself, but must have someone about—St. Peter, or a couple of Wise Men, whose opinion He could fathom. And, as for Martin, if he had had certain things to do over again, he would probably have done them, the same forces playing upon him and the same causes working in him.

It seemed to him now, looking back, rather a strain for a pregnant woman, to be subjected to a week during which she had no idea where her husband was, dead or alive. Just to have him walk out one morning, saying he was off on a mission delicate, dangerous and secret, and he would be back, let us say, on a Thursday. Thursday comes—always remembering the violence on the horizon—and no Martin, and Friday, and Lake himself wondering where his valued aide could be—yes, his mission had been accomplished—and no word on Saturday nor Sunday nor Monday. And there is a feeling in the air—of course unvoiced within hearing of the deserted wife—that Martin's carcass will eventually turn up in some gully or back alley, riddled with bullets. But, instead of the carcass, Martin himself turns up on the Tuesday following the Monday—very lively, quite unriddled, and all clean and shiny, from his new ill-fitting suit to his freshly shaved jowls.

At sight of him so, anger flooded Frances Lyndendaal. Martin could see it in her eyes, in the high spots of color in her cheeks, in the way her little hands flexed and clenched.

"I suppose you're wondering what I've been doing?" he asked.

"Well, yes—I have—"

"For one thing, I found a very interesting companion."

"Yes?" The question was simple, but it was plain enough she was merely waiting for him to go on. After all, she hadn't known Martin very well when she married him. Anything was possible.

"The captain of a tug boat on the Ohio River. You see, I had to get away for a bit—have a chance to think."

"It seems an unfortunate moment to choose for it, with all the trouble at the mills, and Mr. Lake's needing you."

"Yes," said Martin, "as things are now, I fancy he needs me more than I need him. I'll make my peace with Lake."

She looked at him then, and the anger faded from her eyes. Martin knew, somehow, that he was presenting to her what was, to her, his most appealing side. "Yes," she said, "you probably will."

She was a very lovely creature. His child in her had, as yet, hardly marked her slenderness, save with a faintly curving grace of line, and he could bear to watch her as he hadn't been able to bear it for some time past. He had had a chance to think, but he had done a good deal more than think. This tug boat captain had proved an interesting companion, not only on his own account, but for his general knowledge of the possibilities of the upper reaches of the Ohio. He knew every town and every woman—or at least every woman it would do him any good to know. There was a town called Martin's Ferry—that was odd—and Moundsville and Benwood, and the great and fine city of Wheeling. There were bright hostelrys which weren't at all above entertaining a river captain and his helper—particularly, as the helper's pockets were better lined than is usual with men of such humble rank. And then there was a girl named Annabella, and another girl, named Sue.

They were good girls, both of them—though not perhaps in the sense in which that adjective is usually applied. They

were bright and lively and amiable. Martin had had his choice, and had picked Annabella. He'd taken over Sue, too, though the captain didn't know that, as he'd been asleep at the time. He probably wouldn't have minded too much, even if he had known.

In one place they went, there was an extraordinary device, a kind of glorified hand organ, only it wasn't worked by hand. It ran by an engine which Martin remembered examining and more or less taking apart. He got it back together again, too, so it ground out music rather better than it had before. There was one tune in particular. The girls knew the words:

"My gal's a high born lady—
She's dark, but not too shady—
Feathered lak a peacock, just as gay—
She's not colored, she was born that way.
I'm proud of my black Venus—
No coon can come between us—"

So it went.

There were hours of complete rest and peace—only the river smells and the river noises and the little waves lapping the dock pilings. No striving at all. Neither triumph nor defeat. When everything is said and done, a man can climb only so far above himself, can exist but so long in a space crowded with obligations. Then the pressure gets too high.

Martin stood there before his wife, all this and the past days going through his mind, and then he went over to her and put his hands on her shoulders. "You want me to get ahead, don't you?"

"Why, of course—"

"You have faith that I will, haven't you?"

"Why, of course—"

"Then you mustn't try to stop me."

"I haven't been trying to stop you, Martin."

But what he really meant was something he had neither explained nor mentioned. What he meant was that she must never show surprise at his showing up like this, obviously refreshed for the fray, and that he must always be permitted room to turn in—more room than would mostly be required—that is to say, required by someone else.

Frances made no move to remove his hands from her shoulders. The anger gone, she even smiled. "So you and this tug boat captain—"

"You mustn't forget the old man who handled the tow lines—"

"I shouldn't think of forgetting him!"

"Though he stayed aboard most of the time—"

"Naturally—"

Frances was a very remarkable woman. No one, listening to this light interchange, would have had the slightest idea that she didn't know what it was all about. How could she have known? There were other things she knew, however, that Martin didn't.

"I might as well tell you," she said, "before you talk with Mr. Lake, that the strike is considered to be over. The Homestead plant is occupied by soldiers. The governor called out the entire division of the National Guard—eight thousand of them. Haven't you seen a newspaper?"

"No, I've seen nothing."

"Two barges were burned on the river—there's been quite a time."

"Oh, I saw a little bit—at the beginning—and I've heard rumors. I brought those barges up."

"I mean the barges with the men from the detective agency."

"That's what I mean."

"Lake sent you to do that? No wonder he thought you'd been killed!"

"Is that what he said?"

"Not to me, but it was plain enough. He'll be glad that you weren't, because there's still a great deal to be done."

"I told you, he needs me more than I need him, now."

Lake's need of him, in the present crisis, was part of Martin's interminable luck. He knew Lake was angry at him. He knew it the moment he saw him, sitting there at his big desk in his fine office. Lake had the reputation of having a violent temper which, for the most part, he was able to control. He controlled it now.

"I hear you thought I'd been killed," said Martin.

"Obviously I was mistaken. Where did you get those extraordinary clothes?"

"In Wheeling—you know, West Virginia."

"I know where Wheeling is, just as well as you do."

"Probably better. Coal—natural gas—a lot of manufacturing—in a small way. But the possibilities are very great."

For the time being, Lake swept these aside. "What happened to the clothes you were wearing?"

"I threw them overboard—all except my pants. Then when I went home I didn't take time to change, because I figured you'd be in a hurry to see me. I traded in the pants—"

"I suppose it never occurred to you that you might be throwing yourself overboard?"

"That, too," said Martin. And then—after a pause: "But I don't throw so easy. How long are you going to keep the troops at Homestead?"

"I have nothing to do with keeping the troops there. The governor sent them. I suppose he'll keep them as long as they're needed."

"I know—we none of us have anything to do with anything. Mr. Carnegie at Skibo Castle, with the Atlantic Ocean protecting him—by the way, I understand he has a man who plays the bagpipes, who wakes his guests every morning. Must be very pleasant—I always did like bagpipe music.

Yes, Carnegie there and you here and me hiding on a tug boat. By the way, where's Charlie Rosch in all this sweet mess?"

"Rosch is coming back to Homestead."

"I thought you'd want him there."

"Mr. Carnegie cabled."

"Well," asked Martin, "what's the next move?"

He always remembered the surprise in Lake's eyes as he looked up at him. It was as if, for the first time, there was something plain in Martin with which Lake had never reckoned. He looked at him, he pierced through him, and he made a decision about him, all at once. And Martin stood there, meeting his eyes, and not caring a great deal what Lake decided. He'd get along some way. He always had. When Lake spoke, the tone was casual—as though he were retailing a bit of office gossip.

"Rosch's transfer leaves a number of plants facing a rather precarious situation—Thomson—Duquesne—" Lake reeled them off and Martin cut him short:

"It does, doesn't it? There'll be sympathetic strikes, and a lot of men will go over to the union."

"We've got to keep that number down. Would you care for the job?"

"If it would be made worth my while—"

"What would you consider worth your while?"

"That's hard to say. Strikes cost money. If I could keep those plants going—full blast—without interruption—I should have to have authority to run things—"

"I won't recognize the unions."

"I know that. Authority, and some reasonable percentage basis."

"Why, at the end of a year you'd be rich!"

"So would the Carnegie Company. We'll work it out—everything down in black and white—if you want it that way."

"What way?"

"Want me—"

"That's what Rosch said about his situation, too."

"I couldn't have a better endorsement—"

"I thought you didn't like Rosch."

"I don't. But he's a very able man. I used to be afraid of him. I'm not, any more."

"That's good, because at Braddock you'll be under him, in a manner of speaking. He'll be General-Superintendent there, too."

"That's all right. I don't mind a good fight, now and then."

Lake's rare smile broke forth. "With someone your own size?"

Martin matched the smile. "It depends what you mean by size, sir."

So did Martin make his peace with Lake. It was all the peace there was. The strike wasn't officially declared over until November. It had cost the Company two million dollars, but they "swallowed the dose" as they went along, and showed profits of four million after the losses were counted. That was Rosch, largely, and Martin, too—Martin and Rosch working together, and not liking each other any better than they ever had, but Martin learning from Rosch, learning to compromise, learning to swim with the stream. All his profits this year were not in money. At the end of 1892 he had become a man so experienced, and so valuable, that he could practically write his own ticket. He wasn't the henchman of anyone, any more, but important in his own right. This was part of his youth's being over. He'd been so busy, he hadn't had time to think much about it, or think what he'd do with the money he'd made.

Early in January his first child was born. It was a girl. They named her Sarah. She was rather small and delicate. Obviously, a Calverton. He had wanted a son. But he had,

been learning that you couldn't always have what you wanted, so his disappointment was slight. Frances had rather a bad time of it, but took it bravely. It seemed much to go through with for the mite of flesh whimpering in her arms. Martin had never seen a newborn baby before, and Sarah at this time was not the devastating creature she later became. It was money that did that for her—Martin's money. Without money, she probably wouldn't have grown up at all. If she'd been a mill hand's baby, tended briefly by a harassed company doctor, drawing her first breath in a room none too clean, nurtured without constant and highly paid advice—Frances tried to nurse her and couldn't—Sarah would never have survived the winter, or subsequent winters. She never would have been wooed and won by the Count Ignazio Mattiabelli, and obtained from him a divorce, and—for a time, at least—done many things for which the children of mill hands are called names which the fascinating Countess Sarah never was called.

Martin was devoted to Sarah now. She was a very interesting and charming woman, and her second marriage had been the making of her. My God—Sarah was forty-five—or was it forty-six now?—though of course she didn't look it. She was smooth and strong and slightly hard, and thin like all the Calverton women except Fanny. She had a grown daughter, and a son at school. Martin remembered her so well as this puling infant, and being waked in the night by her faint wail. It couldn't be the same human entity. They had nothing in common. The process of growth and development had been too complete. He remembered, particularly, one evening standing with Frances beside him, and looking down at the sleeping child. They were silent, fearing to wake her, and then Frances turned away and Martin with her.

"Better luck next time," said Frances.

"What do you mean?"

"You wanted a boy, didn't you?"

"I would have liked one, but it doesn't matter. Did you?"

"Perhaps. Every woman who has children wants a son, I suppose."

"You went through such hell, I thought maybe you didn't want any more children."

"Don't be idiotic!"

"It can't be much fun for you, the life you're leading—even apart from that."

"It won't last forever. You're not planning to stay here, are you, when your year with Lake is up?"

"I haven't had much time to think about plans—"

"I know—you've worked so hard. But you'll have money then—money to invest. You didn't make it just to spend it, did you? Just to throw it out of the window?"

"Next summer won't be so good a time to invest money—I have a feeling business isn't going to be so good—"

"I should think it would be exactly the time to invest money. When business isn't good you can get things cheap. You could even get a mill—of your own."

A mill of his own. It had been in the back of Martin's mind always. But there was a great deal more involved than merely buying a mill. If it were worth having, he told Frances, the Company would grab it.

"Naturally—if it were anywhere near Pittsburgh. But they're not ready to come to New York yet—or near New York. It wouldn't pay them. It might pay you."

In the spring came the panic. Things were very cheap indeed. Stocks were cheap. Martin played the market and won. And he got his mill. A small fabricating plant in New Jersey. He and Frances moved to New York when his year was up. Lake didn't take his departure as seriously as Martin had been afraid he might. When Martin had spent his money—or lost it, the same thing in his case—he'd come back. There would always be a job open for him, and no hard feelings. If he didn't lose it, and waxed too great, Lake

could always squeeze him out. Martin agreed that any of this might happen, and went ahead with his plans.

If the year before had been a bad year—even though he had survived it—this year was good. The panic didn't bother him. In fact, it helped him. It was essentially a rich man's panic and, at such a time, as Frances had pointed out, the value of the dollar rises. He bought his mill cheap. He bought the additional machinery he needed cheap. Making capital out of someone else's misfortune, the moralist might have called it. But Martin didn't call it so. At the time, the idea never entered his head. If he couldn't have bought cheap, he couldn't have bought at all.

The men in Pittsburgh were shrewd traders. That is to say, they controlled every phase of their product, from the earth from which it came to the labor by which it was finished, and sold at a heavy profit. But it meant little to them to pour millions into a new plant. Martin didn't have the millions to pour. Not when he first cast his fortunes into New York, he didn't. From his labors, and the lucky buying of stocks and this and that, he had managed to accumulate about half a million dollars. He might have retired on that sum, and lived in great comfort on the income for the rest of his days. He could have gone back to Denmark and—his brothers being willing—added to the old farm and raised blooded cattle. But what would he have been in Denmark except a peasant who had struck it rich? He wanted to be at the top, and he wasn't at the top yet—not by a long way. The mere possession of half a million dollars didn't prove anything.

If money had been all he'd been after, he might have done certain things differently. The safest thing he could have done would have been to buy an interest in someone else's mill—go into partnership. This mill he bought was for rolling structural shapes. And the nearest he came to a partnership was to make a deal with a construction company, assuring

himself of a steady customer for his product. To guarantee himself raw material, he made various deals. He hired a group of skilled workmen, and kept them busy while the mill was being put in order, even though actual operation was months away. He had almost his choice of workmen. There were plenty of good men looking for jobs, whose days in Pittsburgh were over because of their part in the strike.

Martin was twenty-seven years old. He knew a good deal about steel. His health was excellent and he had the knack of getting along with people. He had a wife who was not of the type to be expected to do her own housework, and a delicate baby whose medical attention must be reckoned as an item of expense. In Pittsburgh he had made something of a name for himself. In New York he was comparatively unknown. Had he stayed in Pittsburgh he could have been reasonably sure of an increasingly large income. In New York he stood to lose his half million. But that was a paltry sum, as the men Martin had known regarded money. There would always be more where that came from—or somewhere else.

He took a cottage for his wife and child down on Long Island, where the air was clean and the sea breeze swept away the heat. Frances asked her mother and her sister to spend August with her—the boys also. Martin hardly saw the place. He worked day and night. He was going to make something of himself this time.

PART II

As he thought about his life, as he looked back on it from the eminence of age—and what little wisdom age had brought—Martin realized that it had not been a steady paced progress. Not even in retrospect could it be regarded so. For the more he thought about it, the more sharp were the divisions he discovered. It was a mountain range, marked by peaks and gorges, and the speed—at times remarkable—with which this jagged territory had been traversed was, at other times, as pedestrian and plodding as the most timid venturer could desire. In fact, there had been moments when Martin had all he could do to remain in the various places to which his energy and his ambition had brought him. He was like a general in battle, gaining with his forces a distant hill, and then finding that objective difficult to hold in the face of unexpected gunfire. He must have been shrewd, he knew, though he was never unduly aware of this quality in himself, but he was also overly optimistic. He refused to obstacles their due importance. In youth this refusal could be forgiven. Not later.

It seemed to him that his life had been a series of enterprises. Even before he was of an age to indulge in such, unaided, they had been put in his way—like going to his uncle's farm or to school in Odense. Then the inn, then the stoke-hole, and, after that, Pittsburgh and Lake and marriage. These matters had been steps of the utmost importance. But—save for marriage—they formed merely a background. This background was the first era in Martin's life. The taste of success had been warm in his mouth then. It was a warm

sweet stream from the nipple of a kindly Fate. After that, there was a changed flavor to life—the flavor life has when youth is over.

Things began to happen differently. Which did not mean that this first third of living had been entirely happy, or without bitterness, and certainly not without struggle. Neither did it mean that the period following was all gall and wormwood. He had his health, his optimism, his confidence in his own powers, his capacity for working—and playing, too. His whole career had been built on effort, and on luck. And on something else, besides. He'd thought of it before in regard to himself—how people liked him, how they noticed him. It was a certain quality in him which singled him out from the crowd and made him remembered. Again, that dread word "personality." People were always talking about it now. Benison talked about it. Anyone would think, to hear Benison talk, that Martin was some great male motion picture star, and that the dog which Eric owned was kept largely in order to frighten away crowds of palpitating admirers.

"If I had your personality, Mr. Lyndendaal—if I wasn't just a little shrimp of five feet six, a hundred and thirty-five pounds, light—"

"Oh, it's a matter of size," said Martin. He was relieved to know.

"Not entirely—not entirely—"

"Well, if you had this mysterious asset, what would you do, my boy?"

"A lot of things I've never done, you can bet your life! And one thing would lead to another. And, first thing you know, I'd break my contract with J. K. and write a book entirely on my own account."

"What kind of a book? A novel?"

"In a way—not altogether fiction."

"I've heard that most young writers confine themselves to slightly garbled accounts of their own love affairs."

"Nothing like that."

It seemed that this book which Benison wanted to write would conflict with the work he had engaged to do, and as he wasn't in any position to give up that work, there wasn't very much to be done about it. Martin asked him a very personal question—a question which was really none of Martin's business:

"Tell me, Benison, do you get paid for coming here and talking to me, or only for actual work which you intend doing on my biography?"

The young man was evasive. He'd received an advance. He always received an advance when he undertook a project of that sort. But nothing more until the script was completed. "Coming here—well—it kids J. K. along—"

"What do you mean? Is that why you come, to kid him along?"

"By no means!"

Benison refused to discuss the delicate matter further. Perhaps Martin also was "kidding J. K. along" in letting the time of his employee be so occupied. Because he was pretty sure now that there would never be any biography. All Martin wanted to do now was to sit here and think his own thoughts and figure out his own life. He was even interested in trying to determine exactly what part this tremendous boon, this priceless possession, misnamed personality, had played in his success. Perhaps it had served him better than he knew. Because there had been times when MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, had been almost at the edge of failure; and it had been the mere sight of him—the fine broad shouldered six feet two of him, smiling and confident or grave and confident, immaculate from the hands of Eric or careless from his labors—which had reassured his creditors. He was perfectly willing to admit himself capable of using any means at his command. Possibly he dramatized himself. So sometimes people received an impression which wasn't wholly true. They thought he didn't know what fear was, or worry,

or any inner questioning of soul or spirit. Even now they would have been very much surprised to know that he wasn't merely living in a rosy fog of past glories, surprised to know of his honest effort to make sense from his life.

The thing which people didn't seem to realize was that if he had been incapable of such effort, he probably would never have made the material success that he had made. And now that all his remaining strength could flow into this one effort of thinking, he thought as hard as he could. He drove himself, as he had always driven himself—as he would die driving himself, in some manner or other.

His mind was good enough yet. Did anyone think for a moment that Martha ran his business without benefit of his advice? He knew it didn't go forward as it would if he were present. This was a good time for steel. Orders were coming in. If he could have been there—at the mills—even in the New York office . . . Well, he couldn't. Of course Martha was an exceptionally able woman. Julian had been a fool to leave her. Julian had always been a fool. His son—his only son. Fools and wicked men paid for their sins—the fools first. The torch of Martin's thinking wavered, as it always wavered, when Julian was its object. He resented Julian because he thought him weak—because Julian's whole life was in the mesh of that weakness. And he was possibly a little jealous of Julian. That was natural enough. This state of nature accounted for so much, and excused nothing.

Of what good would all this effort of thought be, if Martin used it merely to excuse himself, to crawl out from beneath the weight of his mistakes? He hoped he was strong enough to bear his errors to the end. And if they shifted in his mind from day to day—if one day he thought one thing and another day something seemingly opposite, what did it matter? The truth must lie somewhere between. Because that was what he wanted, after all, to get as near to the truth about himself as it was humanly possible to be. And in this greater truth

sometimes the lesser truths were crushed. He remembered finding in his children's nursery a toy called a kaleidoscope. It was a sort of tube. And, as you looked through one end and rotated the tube by means of a handle, the bits of colored glass within shifted and fell in an infinite variety of patterns. That was what his life was, bits of colored glass which his thinking changed.

In New York Martin made a friend, a young Irishman recently graduated from engineering school, by name Jimmie McMahon. McMahon worked for him for several years and then went to a firm who specialized in digging tunnels. Digging a tunnel was a happy combination of mining and engineering and building. The actual labor was performed by men called sandhogs who dug and blasted and drained and pumped their way through obstacles seemingly insurmountable. That was what Martin was doing now, digging and blasting and draining and pumping his way to the truth about himself. The real tunnel diggers pursued a dangerous course. Martin's method was safer. What difference could it make to anyone but him, what he thought or remembered or forgot, or what conclusions he arrived at? It was never a matter of sudden death, fire at the shaft, exploding gases, the unpredictable accidents of compression. Martin knew something of tunnel building. At one time his mill turned out the steel plates used for shields and the cast iron segments which formed the tubes.

Martin's product was always to be depended on. Any work that passed the specifications of his own experts was known to be of the first grade. He was exceedingly jealous of this reputation, and he could have made money by being occasionally careless. In Pittsburgh he had learned all the tricks, but for himself he never used them. Soon after he had left Pittsburgh there had been a considerable scandal about armor plate sold to the government. Certain plates were selected from each group of plates by government inspectors

for testing. These had been secretly re-treated, to make them tougher, before being forwarded to the department. The scandal involved Lake and the President of the United States and the whole Carnegie Steel Company. Martin was well out of it, but the repercussion of the thing taught him a lesson he never forgot.

It wasn't that he was so over-scrupulous in the general conduct of his business. He pressed his advantage wherever and whenever he could. He had no intention of being thrown to the wolves by his competitors, and there were ways of avoiding it which he never hesitated to use. It was a cut-throat period in industry, and he was a man essentially of his period. His whole training had been in that direction. There was nothing sacred to him about money—there was nothing sacred to him about men. Both could be manipulated in any manner needful to the moment. About steel there was a great deal that was sacred—every process in its making and every use to which it could be put. And as all creatures thrive best tended by those who love them, so did Martin's steel reward his care.

It was hard without brittleness. It was uniform in quality. It was capable of withstanding any strain or stress for which it was designed. If he ever got to heaven, Martin felt, he would arrive there astride one of his girders, being lifted by a crane into the sky. And, if heaven were denied him, he would have ample chance of inurement to the fires of hell. A fiery hereafter might not be so bad—not that he believed in it, or fancied himself, either, seated softly in the ether strumming a harp. Wings would not become him. His shoulders were broad enough without them. And, perhaps because they were so well suited to the carrying of burdens, their load of them was more than sufficient.

In Pittsburgh Martin had been given responsibility—just so much of it as the powers above cared to give him and trusted him to handle. In New York the full impact of the thing was on himself—the full weight. But that was what he

had wanted. He wouldn't have given up those earlier years of working for himself. It was because of them that he was as he was. It hadn't been easy. Nothing was easy. He had never been able to afford mistakes. Working for himself, he could afford them even less. But this was freedom. This was the test to which he must submit himself, just as he must submit to test the steel which, in those first years, he had to buy instead of making it.

For that first mill of Martin's contained no furnaces. It wasn't a rolling mill. It was a fabricating plant for structural shapes. The installation of furnaces cost too much. It was several years before, with the aid of outside capital, he could afford to buy his pig iron and put in his own melting process. And, even then, he did so against the advice of men who were occupied in counting pennies. It would have been cheaper—even then—to buy his steel from other mills, have it delivered in flat cars, and attend merely to the cutting and shaping and riveting in the forms ordered by the structural engineering firm whose needs he supplied.

From the beginning these men trusted Martin, as they couldn't wholly trust the great companies. They knew that any beam or truss or column or angle iron he delivered to them would be right. He maintained his own laboratory, and any steel that passed it would pass anywhere. It would be free from segregations of any kind, have the correct proportions of sulphur and phosphorus, and the carbon at a minimum. The finished shapes would be proved and numbered, ready to put up. The orders were plentiful—it was the profits which were low. The original firm, with whom Martin had made that first deal, had made a better bargain for themselves than Martin had fully realized. And, at the time, he'd wanted them to contract for all his product. They'd refused to commit themselves so far. If they hadn't refused, he'd have lost his half million with nothing to show. It was an escape so narrow that it was like the hair's breadth avoidance

of a collision. The wind it made in passing was long on his cheek. But Martin had enough to think about then, without worrying over his escapes. It seemed to him an occupation which had come to him only now that he was old.

If Martin had arrived in Pittsburgh a few years late, his descent upon New York was timed to the moment. New York was growing. There was room there—room to turn around in. Pittsburgh was in the control of a handful of men. So was New York, in a certain sense, but there the handful was larger. Martin was ever an admirer of the wide vista. He liked to swim about. In New York he could do so. He could even be ignored. He was such a small frog in such a large puddle. He felt strangely alien—almost as he had felt when he had first come to America, but for different reasons. The feeling was really stronger. He was a young man, old before his time. On the one side, he was cut off from his natural companions, on the other, regarded from a distance. The men he knew now—or, rather, the men he must know—were not self-made. He remembered having been so impressed by that little group in Pittsburgh because they wore good clothes and drove good horses and ate in expensive hotels. He had become one of them very quickly. No rest—no rest at all—that eminence arrived at proved merely a foothill. Perhaps every eminence was such. There was a seething quality in New York. In Pittsburgh you worked like the devil, but you knew what you were working for. In New York you weren't always so sure.

Martin ran his mill. And during that first summer he got it ready to run. His main office was there. He took a small office in the city, just for convenience. He would have liked to have Axel there, in charge of it, relieving him of details and little annoyances of all kinds. Learning the business, too. But Axel refused to come. Axel was on the point of getting married. He and Anna Neergaard had saved money enough between them, exactly as they had planned, and Axel was

going into business for himself. Surely Martin could have no quarrel with anyone's going into business for himself. And yet he needed Axel. There was so much his cousin could do for him, besides this obvious and material assistance.

Axel's mind went on where Martin's stopped. That was the trouble with him. His mind was too occupied in going on. The material base didn't matter to him. It was why he had never made more of a success, and might, too, have been one of the causes of his long years of illness and his comparatively early death. He once told Martin that he chose his labor for the peculiar reason that it didn't bind his thought. He could work, and yet be free of his work. He told Martin that we were put upon this earth for the formation of our characters, the character to which Axel referred being obviously not measured by the comforts with which a man could provide his family. Of course the needs of Axel's family—and what, for them, constituted comfort—could in no wise be compared to the needs of Martin's.

Particularly during those early years, it would have been easier for Martin had this been the case, and he had been free to pour practically everything he had into his mill. They lived—or, rather, Frances lived—at the rate of about twenty thousand dollars a year. That money was always set aside, handed over like an unopened pay envelope. And there were times when it wasn't so easy to come by. It was a drain on Martin's beginnings which he might, or might not, have been better off without. If he'd had more money to spend on his own projects at that time, he might not have had the same sense of stress about them. He might have grown careless.

That house he took on Long Island—Southampton was the name of the town—had been built for their own summer occupancy by some people who had been caught in the panic. They were glad to rent it to Martin at five hundred dollars a month. Then there was the English nurse for the baby, and the cook and the waitress and the chambermaid, who also—

oddly enough—did the laundry and helped wait on table at night. In the stable there was installed a colored boy who cared for the grounds and for the mare Cousin Henry had sent up as a belated wedding present. That was the scale on which they must live. Perhaps it paid in the long run, and within that scale Frances wasn't extravagant. To live as they lived, so Martin came to know, would have cost any other woman half as much again. She had everything down in black and white in a little book. She could tell you, years later, what that summer had cost, and other summers. It was worth while. It was all worth while. But Martin found he had to make money outside, particularly at the very beginning before his mill opened.

As he had to, he did. It was two man-sized jobs performed by one man. He had a curious talent for making money, considering he didn't care anything about it, for its own sake. Perhaps that was why. He wasn't made nervous, as some men were, by the vagaries of the ticker tape. And he could usually say in advance, with an accuracy to make brokers gasp, what those vagaries would be. Martin wanted money because he needed it for what he wanted to do, and because he didn't like sailing as close to the wind as he was sailing. He wanted to keep the remnants of his half million as intact as possible for the purposes of his work—and not pay with it grocery bills and servants' wages—not to place it in that unopened pay envelope. He wanted to have something left to trade with.

16

The day of Axel's wedding was the first day, Sundays included, that Martin had used as a holiday in a long time. But naturally he had to be present at his cousin's wedding. He had to stand up with him, just as Axel had for him. Frances was there, too. He'd seen very little of Frances lately, and

she looked so beautiful sitting in the church pew. The Long Island sun had turned her white skin to a lovely creamy tan. Her dress, of a peculiar silk that caught the light in varied tones of red and blue, made a concentrated brightness the eye couldn't miss. She was like her mother in one thing at least. You couldn't always tell what she was thinking. It had been good of her to come up for Axel's wedding. Martin had wondered if she would come. There was a mere handful of people in the little Danish church. There was the prosperous owner of Axel's former importing business and another younger man who was to be associated with Axel in his new venture. There was a shy, awkward young woman—grossly overdressed—who was a friend of the bride, and another woman, also a friend, who was stout and uncomfortable and rather tearful. The sight of a marriage ceremony affected many women so. It was an ill-assorted company for Frances to be in, but you would never have known it by her manner.

Axel's bride, this Anna Neergaard who was a cook, was a fine figure of a woman, tall and strong and competent. She reminded Martin of his mother. Like his mother, she would know, always, exactly where she was bound, and could face that journey unafraid. In later years Anna lost a little of this confidence, but the core of it remained, and no buffeting and no sorrow could change her essential character. Part of this character was an intense pride. Anna would never care to be humiliated, and Martin was aware that the presence of Frances, so perfect and so smiling, was not according to her liking. Possibly she could tell what other people couldn't—what went on inside that exquisite head. After all, she was a cook, a cook one would be proud to employ, but still a cook, and she was marrying a fine gentleman—or someone who appeared as such, in his striped trousers and his Prince Albert coat. It might seem that Axel had stooped to marry her, and that, too, would not be according to Anna's liking. On her side were these two working women, dressed up in

their Sunday best, and on Axel's the great Martin and the great lady who had become his wife, and the reasonably presentable owner of the pickle business. It was a noble showing on Axel's side. Martin took to Anna an immediate fancy, even though he suspected that she had been the main cause of Axel's consistent refusal to join forces with him.

After the ceremony there was some plan afoot to go to some Danish restaurant not far from the church and celebrate a little. Martin would have liked to go, but Frances had a train to catch.

"Why don't you come down with me?" Frances asked of him. "You can surely leave your work for a few hours longer, and there's a train back in the morning. You can telephone your office."

It was just in the past year or so that telephones were coming into general use and efficiently replacing the ubiquitous telegraph boy. She made it sound very easy. But would it be so easy, Martin wondered, letting his cousin down, not joining in the general rejoicing? And would it be so easy, entering a house so rare to him that it still was new—even though it was his own? There was a whole arrangement of life there of which he knew but little. And would it be so easy, leaving in the morning, after having spent one night there? It had been hard enough, living with his wife more or less on his own ground, in surroundings obtained to meet his own convenience. But this was a refuge he had found for her—a place where she would be safe while he went forth, his loins girded for conquest. And it was now suggested that he lay aside his armor and intrude his presence. The proposed visit bore something the quality of an assignation. Martin had not laid eyes on Frances in over a month until he had met her in the 34th Street Ferry House that noon. That was how you got to Long Island in those days—taking a ferry over the river at 34th Street and then a train. Naturally he would do as she said, he would go back with her.

And yet there was Axel, expecting him to come to the wedding feast.

He didn't see Axel very often any more. You would have said, knowing the circumstances, that the cousins had grown wholly away from each other. Yet there was a bond between them, both of memory and of kinship. They had sprung from the same soil, been nurtured from its growth, and their ancestors buried beneath it. And they stood now, side by side, on the church steps, and the women they had chosen for themselves stood near by.

"I'm sorry," Martin started to explain.

Axel answered him in Danish. "Don't be foolish! Come with me and have a drink. Just us two. You can meet your wife in the railway station. I will meet mine in the restaurant."

Martin, too, in Danish. "You cannot leave her like that, on the day of her wedding!"

"It would be only for a little while—" There was the old smile, leading Martin where it might.

Martin turned to his wife. "When does the train go?"

She looked at him blankly, and he realized that he had addressed her in Danish. "I'm sorry. I asked you when the train went."

"It connects with a four o'clock ferry, I believe."

"I'll meet you there. I'll get you a cab."

The canned fish and pickle magnate—uncle of Axel's former comrade-at-arms—who had from the first been utterly bemused by the beautiful lady, stepped forth gallantly. "If you will permit me to perform that slight service—"

That Mrs. Lyndendaal be gotten a cab, that Martin and Axel make off and have their drink, seemed the important conduct of the day. Anna Neergaard, now Anna Christiansen, could never be blamed for a certain set line to her lips.

"We shall be waiting for you, Axel."

"You won't have long to wait—" Axel called it blithely over

his shoulder as he hurried down the church steps with Martin.

She couldn't have had very long, because Martin caught the ferry at four o'clock, having stopped off at his hotel room to pick up a bag. He always kept a bag packed there against the emergencies of his work.

"I wasn't sure you'd come," Frances told him.

"I said I would."

"Yes, I know you did. I suppose you know that you made the woman your cousin has just married very angry."

Martin had it on his tongue to say that it was she who had made her angry, but he held his peace. What he did say was that, after all, it was Axel who had suggested leaving, not himself. So, if the bride were to be angry—

Frances cut him off. "Well, she won't permit it to happen again—that I'll lay!"

"What did you think of her?" Martin asked.

"I think her husband will never lack for a clean house and nourishing food and a warm place to sit before the fire."

"I have a clean house, too," said Martin, "and good food, and a fire too, doubtless, if it is needed."

"You take little advantage of it," said Frances. "How many times is it you've been down? Once, perhaps? You'd like it if you came more often. The house is really rather pretty, with a garden and trees and the ocean a short walk away. It's done the baby a great deal of good."

"That's fine. It's done you good, too."

"I think it has. We lead a very simple life. Emily and I ride bicycles, and there's a little club where Gordon and Jack play tennis. There are a number of very nice college boys down there, on their vacations. Emily's quite a belle."

It wasn't exactly Martin's idea of a simple life. The house was simple enough. Compared to the Lakes' place in East Liberty it was nothing, though it was somewhat larger than the house Martin had lived in when he was first married. But it was his first—or perhaps his second—view of an es-

tablishment designed to be occupied only part of the year. It was new and shining like a building at a carnival. You suspected, though could not trace, the odor of fresh paint. Beneath trees on the lawn, hammocks were hung, and a wide piazza ran along the entire front and one side of the house. There was much straw matting about, and ruffled curtains, and no smoke or soot or even dust. From the upper windows the ocean could be discerned.

Dinner was quite an elaborate affair, served by the waitress and the chambermaid in neat black dresses with white aprons and little white caps. The meal was enlivened by the conversation of the two boys, who had grown unexpectedly tall and were brown as Indians. Their talk, dealing with sports and games, was conducted in a jargon to Martin almost wholly obscure. Emily appeared at dinner but briefly. She looked very pretty, dressed as she was for some festivity to which a young man was to drive her. It was in East Hampton, some twelve miles distant. She was still eager, but the fright was almost gone from her face. The young man drove up with a good deal of clatter in a high two-wheeled cart drawn by a big bay horse. He couldn't come in because he couldn't leave his horse.

When they had gone, Martin turned to Mrs. Calverton: "Do you think it safe—Emily's driving about the countryside at all hours of the night with unknown young men?"

"Your question is well taken," Mrs. Calverton answered, "but Tom Fleetwood's not unknown. He's a dear boy. I know his father. I did know his grandfather."

Tom Fleetwood didn't look like a dear boy to Martin, from the glimpse he'd had of him through the window. He had a hard-bitten quality. He was rather on the small side, though you really couldn't tell if he were, seeing him seated high in the air like that. But Lake was small and Carnegie was small. However, Lake and Carnegie were both very exceptional men. Tom Fleetwood gave no sign then of being

anything out of the ordinary. Oh, well, Emily wasn't Martin's daughter—only his sister-in-law.

"What's this young man do?" Martin asked.

"He's studying law—expects to go in with his father when he's finished."

"Is his father the Fleetwood of Fleetwood and Henderson? I think I've heard of them."

"Yes. He's one of the Morgan lawyers."

Martin knew who Fleetwood was well enough. He'd served Morgan well on a number of occasions and his name had been in the papers for it. He had the right idea about law. It was designed for devising ways of letting people do what they wanted.

"I may have need of a good lawyer one of these days. I'll look him up." Martin felt a bit differently about the young man, now that he knew what he was going to do, and who his father was. But it seemed queer, a fellow like that, perfectly able-bodied, loafing about at a summer resort all summer and taking girls to parties.

"You couldn't do better," said Frances. "I'll introduce you to him on the beach to-morrow morning. I think he's down here over Sunday—I mean, Mr. Fleetwood, Senior."

Martin's connection with the Fleetwoods was one of the most valuable of his many connections in the years to come. And it had begun so casually, a glimpse through a window—a rather questioning and disapproving glimpse. It was a connection in many ways. Martin's sister-in-law, Emily, married young Fleetwood the following year. Marriage seemed the one thing people were thinking about. Though this particular marriage was not, at the time in question, even on the horizon.

"He's only a couple of years younger than you are, Martin," Frances said. "You and he ought to be friends."

That shocked Martin then, that he was only two years younger. But age was not a matter of years.

"Yes, perhaps we ought to be," he answered, without too much enthusiasm.

"It would be a way of getting in with the Morgan interests."

"A rather roundabout way, it seems to me. Besides, what should I do with the Morgan interests?"

"One never knows, Martin, what you might do."

"You have big ideas."

"So have you."

"I suppose I have," Martin answered his wife. In some matters the two were so well suited. All the little pieces of the ambitions they held in common fell in place, side by side.

But Martin was not too conscious of this, later that same evening, sitting out on the broad piazza with Frances, waiting for he didn't quite know what—perhaps for some further comment on the wedding to which they both had gone. Left to herself, she made none. It was as if she would ignore the sources from which he had sprung, and therefore place a barrier between them. This fine house, built as it was for the relaxation of the rich, put a barrier between them also, because he had no sense here of being the master. It was too strange to him, it opened for him—all at once—too new a way of life. It seemed that he had done nothing during these past years but be inducted into new ways, one after the other. There was no peace, no respite. But he was young and didn't need respite. Other men, but little younger than he, in actual years, were doing nothing else here but take life easily. They didn't find enough fatigue. They had to play games in order to induce it! Possibly such men would know, instinctively, how to approach a woman such as Frances. They would force the issue, get it over with. Yes, that was what they would do.

"Well, what did you think of the wedding, to-day?" Martin asked.

"I think your cousin is a very charming man."

"And he is throwing himself away—?"

"Of course. But that is for him to decide—not for us. I shouldn't have gone. I know I was asked, but I really wasn't wanted."

"Axel would have been offended if you hadn't gone."

"And his bride was offended that I did."

So Frances had known that all along. She knew far too much. That was the trouble with her. It was she who had urged him to come down here, and she wasn't making it easy for him. She was laughing at him in her sleeve—that charming sleeve that revealed more than it hid of her graceful arm.

"That friend of Axel, that pickle magnate, seemed greatly taken with you. I suppose he found you a cab?"

"Indeed he did! I had trouble in keeping him from paying for it."

"You refused him that privilege?"

"Why, of course. He's not the sort of man whom one permits to pay for a cab."

"I suppose not." Martin should have been flattered, but wasn't, somehow. He was permitted to pay for everything. "Speaking of the wedding," he went on, "you said an odd thing about it—you said that Axel would never lack for a clean house and nourishing food and a warm place to sit before the fire. I have those things, too."

"Yes, so you assured me."

"And from the windows of that fine room upstairs I can see the ocean."

"Yes," said Frances.

"We might go there," Martin answered her.

"To the ocean?"

"No—"

"Anywhere you say."

With good reason, Martin could claim it all—the house and the woman and even the view from the windows, and the breeze which bellied the curtains, and the good salt smell

which brought memories of his voyaging. Axel had put it more simply. He and Martin had stood, side by side, at the secluded far end of the bar where they had gone to have their drink, and Axel had set down his empty glass.

"And now," he had said, "we go back to our women."

Women were far too important. There was no need of such importance. Men had better minds and better bodies. Women's minds were narrow, their bodies soft. They proceeded to their goals with a sort of icy logic which took no count of the many things in life which were unaccountable. And they pressed their advantage, single and basic and possibly accidental in the scheme of nature, that every man must have his first stir of being within a woman's womb, and it was a house to which he must be ever attempting a return. Outside, in the great world, into which man had made so ignominious an entrance, there was conquest and adventure great and small, according to the individual capacity, and the pitting of one strength and shrewdness against another strength and shrewdness.

For Martin, there were a few acres of land in a swampy Jersey meadow, and a building, hybrid and shabby enough as seen from a train window. But to the knowing eye, to the eye of Martin, who was the owner, it was a structure of the rarest beauty. There were long vistas of dimness, shot with light, and deep silences shattered with small sounds, or sounds which, in such space, seemed small. It might be the shrill hammering scream of a rivet, or the sudden scrape of metal against metal, or the clatter as a workman, repairing the roof, dropped his wrench.

Such sights and sounds were not for women. A woman, entering Martin's mill, would be merely a sightseer, a guest ill-at-ease—a cat in a strange attic—and have no more intrinsic part in the life that went on there than Martin had in this house, misnamed a cottage, in which he had established his wife and child. He thought to leave, to dress quietly and

without waking Frances. He would get down the stairs as silently as might be, and tread the neat gravel path leading to the little gate without sound of crunching. Once on the main road, he could find his way to the station. A train would stop there sooner or later. But while he was thinking all this he fell asleep, and when next he was capable of conscious effort there was no use in leaving, as morning had come. Frances was sitting at her dressing table arranging her hair. She greeted him as casually as though his waking in that room were a daily occurrence. Everything was so cool and bright and clean.

In the autumn they took a house in town. It was a small house. Martin didn't see the point of it at first. He thought they would be better off at a hotel. But Frances said you couldn't entertain at a hotel—which was news to Martin, as so many things were. His wife's entertaining was exceedingly valuable to Martin, though he didn't fully realize its value at the time. He himself seemed so incidental to its success. Why, prominent men whom he met at his own dinner table didn't even always know what he did for a living—and cared less. It was plain he did something. They probably thought he had more money than he did have—some young fellow, with money, whom Frances had discovered for herself somewhere . . . Some of them let it go at that. Some of them vaguely associated him with Pittsburgh—that meant steel, of course. And he'd done fairly well in the Street, some brokers knew. The Street was Wall Street. And the name—Lyndendaal—what was he? His accent was slight, but it still was there. He might be German? Or possibly Dutch? His wife had Dutch blood on her mother's side. Well, the Dutch owned Manhattan Island before the English did. Oh, Danish, was he? Oh, yes, Copenhagen. That was rather a charming little city, someone had said who had been there. The Danes were a seafaring people, were they not? The old Vikings. Now they exported butter.

And, to get back to the Dutch, it was too bad old de Meyster, Frances's grandfather, had been cleaned out in '73.

"You never knew the old man, did you?"

"No, I never knew him."

"You knew Calverton, that Southern chap that Bessie de Meyster married—your father-in-law?"

"Very slightly. He died shortly after Frances and I met each other. I handled a deal for Mr. Lake about some coal acreage Mr. Calverton owned."

"Jonathan Lake—Carnegie's man?"

"Yes."

"Oh—you know Lake—"

"Yes."

All this would usually be after the ladies had left the table, and only the gentlemen remained there with their brandy and cigars. You didn't speak so freely of death and business and losses in the presence of ladies. You never knew what they might repeat, twisting the gossip, too—getting it a little wrong. Even a clever woman, who had a man's best interests at heart, was apt to chatter in the wrong places. Besides, their pretty heads must not be worried with such matters. But Martin didn't speak freely of anything any more—in the presence of ladies, or gentlemen, either. This was not the Martin of the hearty laugh, the roaring commander of engine rooms and shifts. It was Martin in the cloak of modesty he had been at some pains to acquire. He was impressive, even within its folds. His much-discussed personality was there, just the same—and obvious, and of good service. He was a young man of a certain mystery—that was his role—and feeling within himself a power which he did not care to prove yet. If people cared to trouble, they could have some facts about him. These were doubtless attained. So it was not a complete anonymity in which he now existed, but neither was it the glass-walled domicile of his later Pittsburgh days.

He got to know the Fleetwoods, father and son, quite well. Mrs. Calverton had the pleasure of announcing Emily's engagement to Tom, and, a few months later, the marriage took place, making the Fleetwood-Lyndendaal connection complete. Martin rather preferred the old man to the young one. Old Fleetwood knew so many things that Martin didn't. He didn't need law books or statistics. He just knew—in his own head—and he was flattered by Martin's perfectly honest admiration. Fleetwood reminded Martin in some ways of Lake, though the steel man had a vision the lawyer lacked. He could see things whole—what they had been in the past and would be in the future. Martin missed Lake. Emily's father-in-law was the next best thing. And it was a friendship of which Frances approved most heartily. Frances's entertaining was curtailed by the birth of her second child the following May.

It was another girl—a strong fine one, this time. Martin insisted on naming it Frances. The second Frances—or Fanny, as she was always called—looked like Martin, not like the Calvertons. She was Martin with the driving force taken out—Martin, enjoying all the fruits of life, innocently and without effort. She had, almost from the first, a most disarming smile. She didn't change as her sister Sarah changed. She was recognizable, even in middle age, for the plump and gurgling infant she once had been. She was what is known as a good child, and later was one of those rare people who can remain good, and yet have what they want. Her marriage proved that about her. It was funny, thinking of Fanny's birth and marriage all in the same breath. But that was the way Martin often thought about the pageant life had made, not only for him but for everyone else. He fitted together the pieces, even if they didn't rightly belong together. He took the years apart and looked at them, and he couldn't always get them back in the same place. It wasn't like taking apart a mechanical music box or an engine. In such case, it had to

go back in a certain manner, or it wouldn't work. Life had a trick of working, whatever you did to it.

Yes, Fanny managed to get what she wanted. Fanny's being her mother's daughter, and marrying Hazzard Blue . . . Blue was an actor, a comedian, a young man who at thirty—which was when Fanny married him—had made a name for himself by singing and dancing on the vaudeville stage. He blacked his face and wore baggy trousers and enormous white shoes, and sang a song about "Alabama is my Mamma." He pronounced all the A's short and sharp, as you might say, bang! Off stage, he was a slim pale young man, tailored to a turn. He was quite able to support a wife and, after he came back from the war, had done so in style. He was in Hollywood now. He and Fanny lived in a pink stucco palace in Beverly Hills. Their swimming pool was lined with marble. They had two sons, one at Yale, and one going there shortly. That was Fanny. A nice woman, and a happy woman. It wasn't her fault that she hadn't been a boy. You always knew the outcome of things that had happened. You never knew the outcome of things that you would have preferred to have happen. If Fanny had been a boy she might not have turned out so well, or done so well for herself, either. It was the same way about Axel. If Axel had accepted Martin's offers and waxed rich on them, he might not have been able to withstand riches, he might have over-reached himself. He was so clever. In fact, he had said something of the sort to Martin once.

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What Axel had said. The two men were so different, you wouldn't have thought it would matter so much to Martin. What Axel said—what Axel thought—was in the back of Martin's mind, always. Sometimes it was very far back, but it was there like a lining to a coat, holding it firm. And yet

it had in it so little of that material base, of which Martin must ever be possessed or be as lost as a child in a dark forest. The far reaches, the high places where thought might soar, with nothing to cling to but itself, were not for Martin. He knew this, and for that reason suspected a side of Axel of which he could know but little. Axel read a great deal. Perhaps that was the answer—perhaps it wasn't. He once tried to explain to Martin what he called the metaphysical side of religion, which had nothing to do with the rules of the thing, but was man's capability in regard to belief. It was mind—abstract mind. Something which came after nature. It might account for Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or the Blessed Sacrament or the more esoteric aspects of Judaism. It might account, also, for certain sacrifices which Martin, in spite of all he'd done for people, had never been willing to make. Axel had. He might not have done much for his family in providing them with luxuries, but the moment came when he'd pocketed his pride for them, and Martin had never made for his own family any sacrifice to be compared to that.

Yet Axel was not a religious man in the accepted sense. He rarely went to church, and Martin doubted very much if it were religion that upheld him in times of stress. He didn't lean on it, as some people did, to such good purpose. Martin carried this non-leaning policy even further. He'd early reached the conclusion that, if you were to get on in the world, religion was something you might as well forget about. He thought the psalm singing which went on among a certain group of men who had reached the top most unsuitable. It was as if they felt themselves entitled to a special form of assistance from their own private Almighty—had His connivance in various enterprises in which, Martin felt, no Christian God could have been interested. Money, however attained, was purified if you gave some of it to the Church. That was the theory. You bought your salvation, which should have been without price.

That would be a laugh on a good many people who'd always regarded Martin as a heathen, if he—at seventy-three—were to give himself over to a contemplation of such matters. They would regard it, doubtless, as a sort of belated piety, a hysterical drive for cover with death approaching. But it wouldn't be like that at all. It would be, rather, a calm and concentrated attempt on Martin's part to find out what the thing was all about. The Catholics and the orthodox Jews were the most logical of the lot. They set down a set of rules and expected you to obey them. If you didn't obey, you could repent and be forgiven. If you didn't repent—well, Martin wondered exactly what happened. Nothing happened. Nothing whatever. But this was undoubtedly the cause of a great deal of back-sliding. People discovered themselves outside their own church and did nothing whatever about this position. There was a great deal of nonsense talked about religion. This leaning process—this use by the weak as a prop and a support—was an argument frequently used not in its favor. It was an odd thing that Martin had known a good many weak people during his life and he'd never noticed that any of them were particularly pious. But there had been so many things that Martin hadn't noticed.

He hadn't had time. His own life took all the time he had. He was never an onlooker—or so, only now that he was old. And even now he was employed, for the most part, in looking at himself. He recalled most vividly the things which concerned him directly—even the small things. Perhaps his own life was small, too. What was a man's life? Or any life? There were insects whose adult existence covered but a few hours. The fact that Martin's covered nearly three quarters of a century didn't necessarily make it worthy of note. Possibly he represented the end of an era. A new time was breaking—a new age, which wouldn't concern him at all. It would concern his children, and his children's children, the immortal seed which would go on forever. Though per-

haps, in the world which was coming, it wouldn't go on, but would be blotted out in a welter of blood and fury. Martin had five grandchildren. It seemed likely that one of them would survive, though the world they would survive in might hardly be worth the trouble.

Having arrived at that, Martin was brought back with a thud to his own life. That was the danger in all this thinking. You went off at a tangent. Your thoughts wandered and didn't get you anywhere. What Martin wanted was to think about the actual things which had happened to him, all through—to tell himself a straight story. Where was he? The birth of his daughter, Fanny. The marriage of Emily. His growing friendship with old Tom Fleetwood, the Morgan lawyer—one of them, that is to say.

Morgan was a name you hardly mentioned above your breath, he was so great. He was greater than Carnegie or Lake or Rosch, or anybody that Martin had ever known. He was a creature of legend, and still rising. He wasn't very young any more. He had a son about the age that Martin was. He hadn't been born a peasant. He'd been to fine schools and colleges. His education had been marked out for him and his years of apprenticeship guided. Compared to many, his progress had been orderly, even slow. He had probably never in his life done one thing with his hands. All his strength, all his energy, was used in his cold calculating imaginative brain. Martin remembered Morgan with a curious accompaniment of memory. It was the ringing of a bell—a telephone bell. He remembered the ringing as if it were going on now.

The telephone was attached to the wall by his desk in his office at the mill. There was one instrument there and one in the office of his mill superintendent. It was before the days of elaborate switchboards. If the bell rang long enough, a boy usually appeared from some outer space and exercised a rapid judgment about the call. On this occasion—it was noon—the boy was eating his lunch. Martin had some papers

before him. The figures they harbored were not very encouraging. He was concentrating on those figures, as if the mere thought might change them. The ringing cut in. He reached over to stop it—to shut it out. Then he rose and took the receiver down from its hook.

"Yes? What do you want?"

It was Mr. Fleetwood, senior. "Will you be at my office tomorrow morning at nine o'clock?"

"What for?"

"I'll tell you when I see you. It's of the most vital importance."

"Who to?"

"To you." There was an urgency in Fleetwood's voice.

"You sound as though I'd killed someone, and you were going to save me from the hangman's noose."

"Nothing like that, I assure you! I can't tell you on the telephone. But you've got to come."

It showed what a high opinion Martin had of Fleetwood, that he agreed.

"All right—if you say so—"

"Remember. Nine o'clock. Don't be late."

"I'll be there." Martin hung up.

As if he didn't have enough to do, without dashing around to Fleetwood's office! Why couldn't Tom, junior, come over and tell him what it was all about? Something was up. What? He could ask. He could find out that evening, perhaps, but he didn't think he would. He'd just appear—casually—just as a favor. He kept hearing that bell ringing. He heard it that night in his sleep. He dreamed about it. It was a bell attached to a train of cars. He was sitting in the locomotive cab with the engineer. They were going at terrific speed and, the faster they went, the louder the bell rang. He woke suddenly. There was no bell. Nothing but the big room there, and Frances sleeping, and the night wind rattling the window shade.

At nine he walked into Fleetwood's office. The young woman in the reception room smiled at him. A funny thing, having a woman in an office. An office wasn't any place for women, but Martin noticed that in New York offices there were a number of women employed.

"Go right in, Mr. Lyndendaal, Mr. Fleetwood's expecting you."

The lawyer rose when he came in. "Good morning—a lovely day." Fleetwood had always been friendly and pleasant, as an older man would be to a young one whom he liked, and who was connected with his family by ties of marriage. But there was a shade of respect in his manner now—almost a quality of being unctuous. "Sit down, won't you?"

"Thanks. What's up?"

"Mr. Morgan called me yesterday."

"That's nothing out of the way, is it? You work for him."

"He didn't call about that."

"What did he call about? Not that it's any of my business."

"As a matter of fact, that's exactly what it is. He wants to meet you. And knowing that we are connected, he suggested that I bring you over. The appointment is for 9.15. We better start."

"Why, thank you very much," said Martin.

"Don't thank me. I assure you, I had nothing to do with it. In fact, no one could have been more surprised than I was."

"What does Morgan want?"

"That was a point on which he didn't take me into his confidence."

Fleetwood was getting into his overcoat. Martin helped him. Frances had said, a long time ago, that to know Fleetwood would be a way of making a connection with the Morgan interests. But Fleetwood had said that he himself hadn't had anything to do with it. Take it lightly—that was the way to act—don't get excited.

A small frog in a big puddle. That was what Martin was. But the puddle kept getting bigger all the time. So did Martin. If he hadn't, he wouldn't be now on his way to the Morgan office. Size was comparative. If there was no one smaller than you were yourself, then you were small—no one bigger, you were big. Morgan was big in this last sense. But you could be big without being as big as he was. You could, if you had the capacity for power. You mustn't be afraid. You must be able to look straight at the sun, no more blinking than an eagle—a great, screaming American eagle, a sacred bird, symbol of freedom, swift in flight, the terror of chicken yards, like his cousin, the hawk. It was said that eagles could carry away lambs in their claws. There were tales about them even more grisly. Was there a sacred bird in Denmark? Martin didn't know. Little Denmark . . .

Martin was suddenly concerned with the date—December, 1895. He had been in New York two years and a half, exactly. He had spent most of his money. His profits barely carried him. He hadn't known, up to this moment, that everything would be all right. He didn't know it now. He didn't know what Morgan wanted. He'd soon find out. He turned to Fleetwood, who was taking about three steps to his two, as they walked together.

"And what will you be doing while Mr. Morgan and I have our talk? Sitting in a corner watching out that neither of us gets gypped?" It was a question obviously sacrilegious in nature. During the rest of the few blocks they must go on walking, nothing was said—nothing whatever. Martin wished he had had some warning of the coming interview. It came all too suddenly.

Almighty God sitting there, barricaded by a small flat desk—rising briefly at their entrance—asking them to be seated. That great head and the eyes that bored into you, and the look on the face as though there were nothing new in the world—nothing that anyone could tell him that he

didn't know. And yet it was what he asked Martin—to tell him. Why should Martin tell him about himself? What was he to Martin, or Martin to him?

Martin had learned the effectiveness of silence, so he didn't answer at once. Morgan spoke again—"Possibly you wonder what I have in view?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

More silence. Fleetwood was fidgeting. What did Fleetwood expect—to have Martin crawl on his stomach across the space which separated him from the colossal figure? There was one thing which Martin had learned to do—meet important men on their own ground.

"Why did you decide to leave Lake?"

"I wanted to be independent."

"Was that the reason you refused a partnership?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"The Carnegie Company is a big concern, and you were doing well there. Lake liked you—Carnegie liked you. You're not doing so well now. Haven't you ever regretted your decision?"

"I don't think so, sir. A man can get just so far in a place like that, and then he has to strike out for himself. I think I left just at the right time."

"Rosch didn't leave."

"I'm not Rosch."

"You didn't like Rosch, did you?"

It struck Martin, why Morgan looked as if there were nothing anyone could tell him that he didn't know.

"Mr. Rosch and I never had any trouble."

"That's vastly to your credit, Mr. Lyndendaal. But you don't seem to me the sort of man who's afraid of trouble. Though you did walk out on Lake for a few days at the time of the Homestead strike." He'd be saying next how Martin liked his eggs cooked for breakfast, and that he took cream in his coffee, and two lumps of sugar. "You're interested in steel.

And you're independent. Don't you know that the day of independent steel masters is passing?"

"I'm not a steel master, sir, I own a small fabricating plant."

"What will you do when the companies from whom you now buy your steel are swallowed up by the concerns who won't sell to you?"

"I'll buy elsewhere."

"And what would you do if your rail transportation were raised?"

"I've been thinking of shipping by water for some time."

"That would be slow, and limit your source of supply."

"Granted."

"And what would you do if someone made you an offer?"

"For what?"

"For your mill—granted the price was right."

"I'd say, no."

Fleetwood nearly jumped out of his chair at that.

Morgan smiled. "I like a man who can say No. I've said it myself on a number of occasions. Independence is a fine thing. It can be carried too far. There are connections—"

"I'm perfectly willing to make desirable connections, Mr. Morgan. But I want to run my mill my own way. That mill is me. Without me, it would be just another small fabricating plant."

"Good boy," said Morgan.

Fleetwood nearly jumped out of his chair again.

"If you had furnaces you could make your own steel."

"Yes, sir. But furnaces cost money."

"It seems a pity that a young man of your talents should be stopped for lack of money."

"Are you offering to put it up?"

"I might. I'm free to say that I've been very favorably impressed with you."

"Thank you, sir."

"There are your furnaces and your ore—"

"Not ore, sir. That's not profitable. Pig iron."

"I accept the correction. I think we can do business."

Morgan rose then. The interview was evidently at an end. He and Martin shook hands. No word was spoken of future meetings—nothing. Martin remembered looking at his watch. It was half-past nine. They'd been there exactly fifteen minutes. On the street, Fleetwood took a very fine and spotless linen handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped his brow. The sweat which had formed on it evidently took no count of the season or the temperature. Martin himself was calm, with the calm of the unholy. He looked down at little Fleetwood figuratively as well as literally. But he was kindly.

"I think perhaps we better take a cab."

"As you say—as you say."

From then on, that was the correct answer. For Fleetwood, as for a great many other people, it was always as Martin said.

"You had nothing to do with this?" Martin asked him.

"Nothing—I told you—"

"How did he know so much about me?"

"I fancy he got a report on you."

"What kind of a report?"

"Favorable."

"Quite so. I mean, how did he get that kind of a report? He knew things which nobody knows about me—not here in New York anyway."

"He knew things I didn't know," said Fleetwood.

"That wouldn't be so hard. But I thought his interests were centered outside of steel."

"Railroads?"

"Yes. That is to say, apart from banking."

"He's evidently enlarging them."

"Enlarging what?"

"His interests."

Martin settled back in the cab. "Well, he makes the next move."

"By the way," said Fleetwood, "you'll pardon my suggesting that you better not talk about this to anyone."

"Naturally not. What is there to talk about?"

"Nothing—yet. That is to say, nothing is definite."

"Not a damn thing," said Martin. "We're just where we were when we started."

"I think that's putting it a little strongly," the lawyer commented.

The cab stopped. Fleetwood got out. He waited for Martin to get out, too.

"I'm driving over to the ferry," Martin explained. "I should have been at the mill an hour ago."

"Oh, I thought you'd come into my place for a while. There are matters I should like to clarify about Mr. Morgan's consolidations."

"You can clarify them some other time. Thanks for coming with me—being a witness."

Martin left Fleetwood standing on the sidewalk. He thought of the time, not so very long ago—just the other day, in fact—when he'd held the firm of Fleetwood and Henderson in a certain amount of awe. He must keep his awe. It was a good thing to have.

Fleetwood had advised him not to talk. As he'd said, in reply to the advice, he had no intention of talking. He said nothing, even to his wife. He didn't want to raise her hopes, and then, for any reason whatsoever, disappoint her. He wouldn't tell her anything—not, at least, until Morgan approached him again. She was of a temperament impatient of delay, and there might be delays. Besides, he might himself decide against the whole scheme—and be free to do so—when he found out exactly of what it consisted. Frances might push him into it against his judgment and his wish. She would be so impressed and proud. Let her wait till she had something to be proud about.

That night at home—he had worked late at the mill and

didn't reach home till about ten o'clock—he caught Frances looking at him.

“What's wrong?”

“Nothing. I was thinking that you're working too hard. You ought to take a rest.”

“This is not quite the time to do it!” He was rather short with her. He didn't mean to be.

He thought more highly of Frances than he ever had thought. She was beautiful, considerate, clever. Clever, beyond anything. Why, she had spoken of the chance of a Morgan connection when it had seemed to Martin like something that couldn't happen. She doubtless knew that something was up, but she never asked stupid questions. She left him as free as though his freedom did not concern her. Yet he never could count himself in any sense neglected. That upstairs sitting room off their bedroom, with the big leather easy-chairs and the long table, not too fine for work, was arranged especially for his use. He never found stray guests preempting it, or noisy children or camping relatives. And, no matter at what hour he might return, there would be a covered tray with sandwiches and the materials necessary to the preparation of a drink. Frances was the lucky number, the grand prize, which Martin had picked as part—and what a part!—of his eternal luck. And he knew it.

He knew something else at this time—possibly at this very moment—which he hadn't fully known up to then. It had come so gradually, and now it was here. He wasn't in love with her any more. He admired her inordinately, but that flooding passion he once had felt for her had gone dry, and the thing which had taken its place wasn't even the habit-formed physical closeness it would be natural a man would have to a woman whose bed he slept in night after night. What was lost was like a death which had crept upon him gradually, and his realization of it was like the sorrow following death. Possibly she was too good for him—too perfect.

Possibly a woman who annoyed him more would have held his love. An unreasonable woman who clung and wept—that was what he deserved of life. Not perfection. Not this quiet ordered dwelling where everything was smooth for his comfort. It wasn't her fault, surely, that the place always seemed strange to him. But love was evidently something which came and went almost of its own will, beyond reason and beyond control. Or was it merely that it couldn't thrive alone, or beat itself against a stone wall forever without mortal hurt? That the wall was invisible and never deliberately erected as hindrance, made it none the less present.

"I feel perfectly well," Martin said. The words sounded like an answer to her suggestion of rest. They really were more connected with his own private thinking.

"I never said you didn't. You always feel well. But change would do you good. You remember the MacBaines?"

Martin remembered them. Frances had known them first in Paris. They had spent last winter in New York, but were now abroad again where they lived most of the time, and spent most of the money the MacBaine grandfather had accumulated in California, in 1849.

"Well," Frances went on, "they've asked us to visit them. They have a house at Cannes, on the French Riviera. We wouldn't have to stay long."

"I couldn't manage it. Why don't you go?"

"That would be rather silly."

"Why silly? You probably need a rest more than I do."

"What about the children?"

"Couldn't the nurse, and possibly your mother, manage the children? Sarah's not sick any more, and the baby's a husky little thing. Everything would be all right."

"It wasn't what I meant when I suggested it. I meant that we should go together."

"I know you did. Some other time, perhaps, but not now." Martin almost told her then just why it was that his leaving

now was out of the question. Her suggestion disturbed him oddly, as adhesions in an old wound may sometimes create a spasm not unlike the original suffering.

"Are you sure you wouldn't mind my going?"

"Why should I mind? But remember, you're a Danish subject yet. My final citizenship papers don't come through till next year."

"I thought Fleetwood had arranged all that."

"He has. But it takes a little time. I arrived in this country in a slightly irregular manner."

"And I suppose," said Frances, smiling, "that, as a Danish subject, I might get drafted into the army—or something of that sort—"

"Why not? Tell them you're coming, and you'll have the whole army waiting at the dock!"

In those days you could jest about the Danish army. You couldn't now. There was damned little of it left to jest about, since the Socialists had come into power. Denmark might have need of her army to-day, with the precarious condition the world was in, and if such need developed—well—an army wasn't something you could call into being over-night.

But Martin's present fears had nothing to do with this scene with his wife, which had had all the outward semblance of a delightful domestic intimacy. The outward semblance was deceiving, like a scene between actors on a stage.

Martin didn't worry too much about Morgan's report on him. He didn't know then that Morgan received reports on a great many owners of industries which he might find valuable. These were not all favorable, as Martin's had been, and did not warrant interviews. And, if they did so

warrant, the interviews were not necessarily successful, as Martin's had been.

Gradually, so as not to attract notice, the various steel plants outside of Carnegie's were being brought together, integrated into trusts, consolidated in various ways. Money for these plants was always available, and material and transportation. Plants which, like Martin's, hadn't proved profitable, became so with this influx of capital. Costs were lowered, selling prices raised. There were dangers. The dictatorship of Morgan wasn't to be accepted lightly. But, as far as Martin was concerned, the peculiar thing about the situation was that he personally never had to accept it. Morgan liked him. Morgan liked his way of doing business. So he let him alone. He advised him occasionally, and Martin took his advice because he found it sound. For Martin, it was sound.

And Martin proved valuable to Morgan in various capacities outside of his talent with steel. He was a good negotiator. Lake could have told the great man that about him, if he'd had any need to hear it from other lips. The whole thing was so simple, but from the very beginning people goggled—people like old Fleetwood. Morgan admired order. So did Martin. He hated hypocrisy. So did Martin. He was willing to drive himself to the last gasping inch. So was Martin. He loved strength inordinately and despised weakness. He cared about power, for its own sake, more than he cared about money. Naturally, he knew more about money than Martin did. He was a banker.

Frances sailed a few days after Christmas. Martin didn't inform her of what had happened until she got on the boat. He told her, in answer to her surprise, when he handed her an extra letter of credit. Young Tom Fleetwood was at the boat with Emily. He'd known for several days, but had been adjured to keep his mouth shut—in this case, an adjuration hardly required. Everything had worked towards a satis-

factory and swift conclusion. The mill was still Martin's—merely affiliated. Proper furnaces were to be installed, additions built, space added. Everything was signed and sealed. All the old worries would be replaced by new ones—the gilt-edged worries of the great.

Frances's comment had an odd quality, either as if she didn't quite believe the thing, or had believed it for so long that she couldn't accept it as news: "I suppose it's extraordinary—" And then, after a pause—"Yes, I suppose it is!"

The situation was briefly explained to Emily, who must be told as she was near at hand, but had no real mind for such news. If there hadn't been so many people about, Martin would have gone into it with Frances in greater detail, because Frances had just such a mind.

"I wish Father could know about it," Emily said.

Gordon Calverton's daughters looked at each other.

"The earth covering his grave would be all thrown up from his turning," said Frances, and stepped away to greet some friend who'd come to see her off.

"It's certainly very gratifying," Tom Fleetwood put in. "The old man is buzzing about like a hen who's hatched an eagle."

In Denmark you did not say such things about your father as Tom Fleetwood and the Calvertons seemed to feel free to say. This was not Denmark. The ship wasn't even sailing for a Danish port. It was a fine ship—finer than any Martin had ever served on. He was seriously tempted to go down to the Chief and present himself as an experienced hand and get a job in the engine room. He didn't go—or go near the engine room at all. He might find old friends there. Martin had travelled far on ships. Farther on land. The whole thing seemed a little unreal. Not quite eight years it had been, since he'd come to America—a strong plant, torn up by the roots, and finding again earth and water and thriving in the new soil. But why should he not have thriven, and done well? Even

Frances only supposed it extraordinary—she wasn't sure it was so. And Martin was just at the beginning—that, too, she would have been the first to grant. He was always thinking it about himself—that he was just at the beginning.

Now that he was old, he had to catch himself up short sometimes, not to think it. Because whatever it was that he was at the beginning of now, wasn't usually called by that name. He wondered how far from the beginning he really was—how near the end—and how much time he would still have left him for his thinking. It was as if he had had a task set him, which he must complete against time. And yet wasn't it a task which could never find an end, in the same way that his thinking could never find an answer? Axel had once said that save for certain spiritual values, a man's life didn't matter. He'd laughed as he'd said it, not making light of the fact either. There were so many things which didn't matter to Martin now, it was hard for him to understand the store he had set by them.

That clear January day, looking out to the busy river and filling the door of his wife's cabin with his bulk, he remembered the sense he'd had of a substance less static than land beneath his feet. Woven with the high pitched chatter on which he'd turned his back, and the good familiar sounds of a ship in harbor, it formed a peculiar well-being which filled his veins, replacing the virus of fatigue. He was aware that he had been tired for years on end. His being so was like a long and difficult lesson studied by a school boy. But he had torn out the page now and thrown it away—discarded the used sheets of the copy book. There would be other pages and other lessons, but this one was finished.

The cabin was crowded with people and roses, but it was really quite commodious, as befitted Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal on her way to the French Riviera. It was on the upper deck, with windows instead of portholes and a bed in it instead of a bunk. Even in the disorder incidental to de-

parture, it had a sort of cultivated luxury. Everything had been designed for indulgence rather than use. The pile of the carpet was too thick, the polish of the woodwork too high, the roses were of a deep red and gave forth a concentrated rose scent. A dressing case lay open on a little table, displaying a plethora of crystal and silver. Champagne had been opened. People hadn't finished their drinks, and might not bother to. The glasses stood about, half drained. Frances had laid aside her coat. Martin had never noticed before the fawn satin lining, quilted in a complicated design to have occupied a skilful needlewoman for days. But this was the way you travelled when you had money. They didn't have much money yet—what would they do when they had more? Live like the Lakes, surrounded by brick and wrought iron? The Lakes were negotiating to replace that with a palace on Fifth Avenue, so Martin had heard. He hadn't seen Lake in a long time—he supposed he would, sooner or later. Whistles were blowing. He must step aside, to let people pass—stewards with trays, guests. For a moment, he found himself alone with Frances.

"I wish you were coming with me," she told him. The suggestion seemed fantastic, instead of commonplace.

"I wish I were—"

"You better come along, if you're coming," someone called to him, "—the last whistle's blown."

Martin kissed his wife rather hastily. "I'm coming—" And then to her—"Take care of yourself—cable me when you land—"

"You take care of *yourself*—"

"I figure to do so."

The brief parting was accomplished. Martin remembered going down the gang plank, flanked by Emily and Tom and several other people. Old Fleetwood had given Tom an automobile for a wedding present. It was waiting, but it must wait longer while they all stood on the dock. The

ship began to move very slowly. Much waving, and the little creature that was Frances, with her coat wrapped well about her, standing on the high deck and looking down at them. From that distance, Martin couldn't see her expression, but it wouldn't have mattered if he had. You never could tell what she was thinking. The boat nosed out into the river current. They turned away, towards Tom's automobile.

"You ought to get one of those things," he said to Martin, opening the door for him.

"Some time. Unfortunately, I haven't Fleetwood, of Fleetwood and Henderson, for a father."

That was one thing to do with money, send to Europe for great machines like this. There were a number of them over here now—some were being made here. Why, Martin had heard that a man named Henry Ford had made one in Detroit—very small—not like this one.

"You feel so conspicuous," said Emily, "and it frightens the horses so."

"Cousin Henry wouldn't approve," Martin laughed.

"I can see Cousin Henry's colts—they'd shy clear over into the next county!"

"I don't think Cousin Henry need worry yet."

"No, not yet."

"By the way, how did Jack enjoy his summer?" Martin asked.

Jack was the younger of the Calverton boys. He was crazy about horses, and Cousin Henry had had him there in Maryland for the whole period of his summer vacation. There was some talk of the boy's making a serious study of breeding—as a career. Martin saw nothing against it, if that was what he wanted.

"Oh, he had a wonderful time—wonderful—"

Martin chatted rather idly with Tom and Emily, and told them about this man Ford, who'd built the little car, out of odds and ends, as you might say—run it for a thousand miles

and finally sold it for a couple of hundred dollars in order to have money to go on with his experiments. Martin had seen a piece about him in the paper. The car had two cylinders, with a two and a half inch bore and a six inch stroke set side by side over the rear axle, and developed about four horse power. Martin's admiration of Ford had begun at that time, before most people had ever heard of him. Later, years later, when he knew him and had certain business dealings with him, he found him an odd little duck. Very quiet, Ford was, as quiet as a piece of radium sealed away in a lead tube. He was crazy about antique American furniture—had a house filled with it, and a museum. And his father had been born on the other side. His mother's people were Dutch. He might so easily have remained an eccentric mechanic, and nothing more. That was all he was to Martin—the admiration thrown in—on that day when he could be talked about, instead of matters more important, like Martin's own innermost feelings, or his dealings with Morgan, or the proposed installation of his beautiful furnaces.

Tom was taking the day off, it being a Saturday. He and Emily were having lunch together at the Holland House and going to a matinee afterwards, going to see a play at the Empire Theatre. The comedian, John Drew, was in it. Couldn't Martin join the party? No, Martin had work to do.

"But you must have lunch somewhere!" Emily urged.

She was a friendly little thing, and grateful. If Martin had never existed her whole life would have been different. In later years Martin entertained some doubts of the advantage he had brought, but then these had not arisen. He remembered Emily so well the first time he had ever seen her, when she had come into that stark cold room carrying the tray of cakes, looking eager and frightened.

"I'll pick up a bite," he told her now. It was too bad to disappoint her, but the mill was more important.

"I'm coming in to see the children to-morrow," Emily went

on. "They're such darlings—and so different. Sarah's so bright. But why shouldn't she be, with you and Fan for parents?"

"Yes," said Tom, quite seriously, "why indeed?"

"Mother's so delighted to be with them."

Emily and Tom had not a sign of a child, and they'd been married—how long was it?—pretty close to two years. Perhaps the Calverton blood was running thin and Martin was fortunate, even if his own children didn't number a son among them. He was always fortunate. But he said nothing of this. What he did say was—"I've heard that delicate children are often like that."

"Like what?"

"Bright."

They drove him to the ferry. That great awkward car was a fateful chariot cutting a clean swath through the streets of the town, conspicuous even as Emily had said, and frightening the horses. He'd have missed that particular ferry if it hadn't been for the car. And not missing it affected several years of his life.

He was pretty sure he'd seen the woman before—possibly on that same ferry trip. He couldn't have noticed her before very much. She wasn't anyone you'd notice—not at first sight, anyway—quiet and neat and rather shabby. She was wearing a coat far too light for the season. The only really noticeable thing about her was a mass of very pale blonde hair done up in a great coil at her neck. Whether Martin had ever seen her before or not, this time he saw her standing on the lower deck of the ferry boat gazing down into the water with an odd intensity. Her hands gripped the rail. He found himself standing next to her.

"It looks cold there," she said. She must have been speaking to herself, because she couldn't have guessed that this big fellow near her understood Danish, and that was the language in which she spoke.

"It is cold," he answered.

She looked up at him, startled. She may have been in the habit of talking to herself, secure that she would not be understood. "Ah—you are a landsman!"

She meant it in the sense of compatriot, not in the sense of one who lives on the land. In the Danish there was a *d* on the end of the word. Martin saw that her eyes were wide and very blue, with a childlike quality, in spite of the fact that she must have been about his own age. She wasn't pretty, but possessed an asset which could well replace prettiness. She was extremely feminine.

"Yes," said Martin, "I come from Odense. Doesn't the ice in the river remind you of the old country?"

"It would be better without it!" She spoke rather sharply.

"You're not thinking of jumping in, are you?"

"I was—yes."

"Please don't. It would only delay the boat, and I have to get to work."

"A big strong fellow like you should have no trouble finding work, even if you were late, and lost your job because of it. That is how I lost my job—being late."

"What was your job?"

"I worked in a hat factory. That is a very good hat you are wearing—made of the best felt. You must have a good job, or you could not buy such hats."

"Yes, I'm a foreman." The boat was nearing shore. "When am I to see you again? Because that's nonsense about your jumping in the river. Where do you live?"

"Jersey City."

"There must be some place where we could meet this evening—some restaurant?"

"But don't you work late?"

"Not to-night," said Martin, blatantly. "You see, I was given the morning off."

"They must think a great deal of you, to give you time off like that."

"Perhaps."

As the ferry slid into its slip an hour and a place were agreed upon. She asked his name. Almost without conscious guile, he told her the name he had gone by at sea:

"Mark Linder. And yours?"

"You may call me Margeretta."

"That's a very fancy name!"

"I'm a very fancy girl."

She evidently didn't know what the term usually connoted, because she wasn't a fancy girl at all, in that sense. Yet she had accepted his approach without demur. It was quite within her code and habit of conduct. She left him with a gaiety which boded ill for suicide. That may have been a bluff—or at least a mood—she may never really have intended suicide.

Martin's intentions were not honorable. He made no bones about it to himself, whenever he had time to think about it during the afternoon. Of course he would have to find out more about the woman. He couldn't afford to get into a mess. He could have entered into an illicit relationship before this, if one that suited him had offered itself, but he'd been too busy for any searching and his specifications were not too easy. He demanded a certain degree of respectability, for one thing. He was not in a position to take on an elegant mistress, bediamonded and besabed, and the less prosperous members of the sisterhood didn't appeal to him.

He kept thinking during the afternoon that he would have to tell her he was married—right at the outset, before anything was settled. He couldn't get into a mess—he kept thinking that—or get involved, or sued, or lay himself open, at the very least, to tears and recriminations. He would find her a job, he could do that by some means or other, and supplement the wages the job brought—pay her rent, for instance, in a decent place, make her comfortable, and himself, too.

He didn't excuse himself. He never did. He didn't now, thinking back and remembering how matter-of-fact he had been about something which should have carried him away, if it did anything. If he had been totally irresponsible for his acts, like the time at the inn . . . That was different—he'd been a boy then. He was a man now, and not a porter either. And those girls on the tugboat—but that was different, too. That was a moment of respite—an assertion of independence. There were men who were always asserting their independence in such a manner. It was all right when it happened naturally and simply. There were men, too, who were always getting involved with women of their own class—the wives and sisters, even the daughters, of their friends—and prided themselves on their talent for polite seduction. Martin doubted his own possession of such talent, or that he would use it if he had it. Besides, the funny thing about this particular situation was that this woman was of his own class, exactly.

She had been raised on a farm, Martin learned that night, had come to America with an aunt and uncle who since had died. She was quite alone in the world, and living in a little furnished room from which now, as she was jobless and penniless, the landlady threatened to evict her. She already owed her twenty dollars. You couldn't expect the debt would be allowed to run beyond that. Martin put twenty dollars on the table between them. She made no move to pick it up.

"Isn't it better than suicide?" he asked.

She looked at him a long time. "Yes, I suppose it is. With you. With some men, it wouldn't be."

Martin didn't want her to take it, having any false ideas. He chose this moment to tell her he was married.

"You're married," she answered, "and you pay in advance."

"No," said Martin, "that is not in payment. I want you

to have that, just as a little gift from one countryman to another. I should never want you to feel I was taking advantage of your extremity."

She never did feel so, he thought. He always did a little more for her than he had to do, or than she expected. In the past, her scattered experiences with men had been unfortunate. Men had promised her so much and given nothing. One man had taken all her savings, and presumably his own, to buy a house with, but the bride he had brought there was not herself. Another had occupied her youth, keeping off other suitors, and then—almost within sight of the church—told her he had changed his mind. A third, through drink and undesirable companions, had been led to commit a serious crime for which he was now paying. Martin was of the opinion that she was well rid of the lot of them.

She blossomed under Martin's care. The hollows in her cheeks filled out, beneath her eyes the shadows faded, and the little blue veins which had showed so clearly across the backs of her hands disappeared. In fact, she became so attractive that she received a good deal of attention in the men's hat and haberdashery store where Martin was instrumental in getting her a job. Several years later, she married the proprietor, with all of Martin's best wishes. Those soft little women usually found some way, if you gave them half a chance. He was glad she was soft. If she'd been hard, she might have affected his life too much and too importantly. No, he couldn't feel he'd done Margeretta any harm, even though he doubted that her suicidal intentions would have been carried out.

What harm Margeretta had done to Martin was another matter. Possibly she had marred the integrity of his soul, if either integrity or soul existed. She had launched him, too successfully, on the form of conduct known as a double life, the right hand knowing not what the left hand doeth. If the initial launching had been unsuccessful, it might have been

better for him—better, at least, for this soul of his. But at thirty the soul had not been as important as, at seventy-three, it had become.

In thinking about Margeretta it was easy to remember the more factual side, not so easy to reconstruct in memory certain of her qualities. She was a woman of strong passions, though you would never guess it to look at her, and she permitted to him a completeness of intimacy which he never knew—in quite that sense—with any other woman. Perhaps it was fortunate for Martin's future that they had only the one meeting ground, and, that apart from the happy difference of sex, he didn't find her a consistently interesting companion. They were of the same race. He too freely admitted them of the same class. It was very pleasant for him in the little flat he provided for her. He never felt strange there, or out of place. He could rest—be himself—do as he pleased. But he was growing and changing all the time, and she—aside from the obvious changes already noted—was always the same. So he was perfectly satisfied when she decided to get married. In fact, he made an effort to conceal from her how satisfied he was. The effort was vain—she wasn't a fool. Martin had sworn no fealty to Margeretta—no fealty of any sort—nor she to him. And he felt none. That was perhaps the one bad spot in the relationship there was between them—it should have meant more or meant less. As it was, it just meant something. And it went on for several years because it was satisfactory on both sides. It probably saved Martin from relationships that would have been less so.

But that first year, that first winter of Margeretta, there was for Martin a certain freshness in the situation which in itself held him. Yet, in spite of this, he more and more looked forward to the return of Frances. He was so proud of Frances. He wasn't particularly proud of Margeretta.

It was in March that Frances came back. She had re-

mained on the Riviera rather longer than she had planned. If she found Martin changed she didn't say so, except to tell him how well he looked. If he was proud of her, she was proud of him, too, and of the children, and of everything. There was just one thing wrong. It seemed a pity that a brilliant man such as Martin should lack a son to carry on his name—a son to inherit a proper share of the fortune it was now fairly plain that Martin would accumulate. When Frances told him this, it was as if she had read his mind.

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Of course they could only hope—hoping against hope for all those months. Frances carried the child forward and low, which some doctors said was a sign. She heard of a doctor who counted heart-beats—that was a sign, too. Just a theory—if the heart-beats came quick, it was a boy—was that it? Nothing had been proved. They would know soon enough. Martin sometimes wondered why Frances wanted a son almost more than he did himself. Was it a desire common to all women? Or was it most characteristic of those whose marriages had not been entirely successful? The physical attachment of the husband failing, they must bring forth another male who, at least for a time, is close. Frances never stressed her own wish in this—it was always Martin, and Martin's son, for whom they were waiting. It would be indeed too bad that the name of Lyndendaal should survive only in the person of farm boys in Denmark.

Both Martin's brothers, Karl and Peter, had sons, so they wrote him. He sent them money every Christmas, and the latest infant had been named for him. He hadn't liked that, really. It would mean he would hesitate in calling his own son Martin. But he couldn't tell them so. There was something else he should have told them—or, rather, asked them.

Karl and Peter would know, as stock breeders, secrets of breeding which Martin had heard only dimly and then forgotten. There was some procedure followed with considerable success. If you tire the mare and rest the stallion—no, it might be the other way about—if you tire the stallion and rest the mare—Martin wasn't sure. Of course some women bore sons naturally—some men begot them.

Julian Lyndendaal was born on the evening of December twenty-fourth, like a child more famous than he ever became. Julian's mother very nearly died. The doctor said she was built very small. Her other children had both been small, at birth. This one weighed ten pounds.

"He's just like you," she told Martin, "big and strong."

Martin felt the triumph in her voice, weak as it was, and so low he had to bend close to hear it. Her hair, damp from the sweat of agony, looked black against her white brow, and her hands were so thin you could notice the bones stretching the skin. Yet birth was a normal act. Most women didn't go through this. Perhaps she had made too much of it—walking every early morning in the Park, until it became too hard for her to walk—drinking milk and cocoa and nourishing soups, because she wanted to nurse her child, which she'd never done before—and going to this new fine hospital on the doctor's advice, when most women didn't go to hospitals for such a purpose. Not then. Perhaps it was merely that Frances was unsuited to the pangs of motherhood, and always had been, and this was her third child. Sarah had been born at the beginning of the year 1893, and this was the end of 1896.

"Your wife comes of a very old family," the doctor said.

That was nonsense, because all families were equally old, if you could find out about them. The ability to trace an origin didn't alter the essential facts. But what the doctor meant was that for many generations they had lived soft—not labored—and, also, a certain amount of inbreeding had

doubtless taken place. Cousins had married cousins again and again.

"She wanted a son," said Martin, as if in apology.

"Didn't you?"

"Of course."

These words with the doctor were spoken outside the door of Frances's room—the finest room in the new hospital, and filled with flowers and nurses and the odor of disinfectants.

"As for the boy," continued the doctor, "he's big, but he doesn't seem to me extremely vigorous. He'll have to be watched. Oh—perfectly normal in every way. Just a little lethargic, shall we say?"

Julian was watched. Frances had been in the past competent and executive in the role of mother—not notably devoted. She now became the bane of a series of expensive nurses. A certain hardening process would have been better for Julian, he should early have been taught to depend on himself. Instead, he was spoiled. He was given in to in ways that he shouldn't have been—picked up when he fell down, guarded from vulgar contacts. He was perfectly normal, just as the doctor had said. His processes were a little slow—that was all. His other qualities were superimposed on him by his environment. Anna Christiansen, Axel's wife, would have been the woman to bring up Julian. Even Margeretta could have handled him, or the nurses, if they'd been left to themselves—which they weren't. Little Sarah, who was so bright, put the matter in a nutshell:

"It's the baby this and the baby that! He isn't the only baby in the world, is he? I was one myself a little while ago, and Fanny's little more than a baby now. But he's a boy. Little boys seem to be much more important than little girls are."

"Oh, that's not true," said Martin.

"Oh, yes it is. Little boys get everything. Some time, I'm going to show boys just how much they don't matter!"

Which was an odd and false prediction, coming from the Countess Sarah. There was no countess in her name then. Or was it so false, after all, Martin now wondered.

Martin might have done a good deal about Julian's upbringing, but the press of his work prevented. Besides, it wasn't a man's place to superintend the nursery. The Lyncendaal way of life was getting more complicated day by day, more hedged about with formalities. Martin couldn't enter his guarded and disinfected nursery and say—"Look here—that child should be made to drink his milk. And he shouldn't be given any more toys till he stops breaking those he has now!"

You didn't do that, any more than you descended to the kitchen and interfered with the cook. And it was only in searching back through all the years, and forming an estimate of the past, that Martin came to any sane understanding of what his son's training—or lack of it—had accomplished. Little Sarah was hardly to be taken seriously as a commentator. Martin didn't take her seriously, but he was growing very much attached to Sarah. Fresh from state permission to gaze on the rather expressionless countenance of Julian, he remembered wishing that Sarah had been the boy of the family. It wasn't a fair comparison—give Julian time. Raising children wasn't like raising cabbages.

Julian, newborn. Julian as a baby—as a child—as a boy who didn't get along well at school, either with his books or with his companions. Julian being thrown out of schools and colleges—refusing this, refusing that. Quite handsome, he was, if it were not for the essential weakness in him—the weakness fostered as well as essential. Julian, resenting Martha, clinging to her, loving her, marrying her. Julian and Zari Hanajos and the terms of his mother's will. And Matthew, Julian's son, who was everything that Julian was not. And now Julian, a middle-aged man, a frustrated unhappy figure, lax from self-indulgence, tossing restlessly on

the disordered bed he had made for himself—cut off from Matthew and from Martha and from Martin, and from any reasonable respect. It was said that Julian brought Zari's coffee to her every morning, and got roundly cursed if it didn't please her. It was said that when her lovers called, he was set out on the doorstep as one might put a cat for the night.

No, raising children wasn't like raising cabbages. A cabbage could be watered and fertilized and let to grow in proper soil and sun, and, at the right season, dug and placed in a cart and sent to market. The cabbage which had not done well, which had grown misshapen or brown or wormy, would be discarded by the market gardener who valued his reputation. There the problem was simple. The gardener would have no lying awake of nights, wondering if the brown one was caused by his own neglect. There were so many cabbages. There was only the one son. Martin sometimes had an idiotic idea that he ought to get down on his knees to Julian and beg forgiveness.

It was more than idiotic—it was impossible. Martin couldn't get down on his knees to anyone. He couldn't stand, except with help. And even if he did succeed in this gesture of self-abnegation—Julian, the while, having been spirited here from God knows what steaming South American city—it would be nothing more than a gesture. The good fortune of a plea lies in its reception by him to whom it is addressed. And Julian would look at his father with that look he had, chronically a little sullen and a little discontent, and say to him in that inimitable accent of his—the one treasure gathered from his attempts at learning—"What the hell are you trying to do, Father?"

And then Eric would come in and find them so, and lift Martin up and bring a drink to Mr. Julian—then, and only then, finding time for a reasonable measure of surprise at Julian's being where he was, and Martin's being where he

was. Eric never sat down in Julian's presence, as he often did in Martin's, because Julian was a gentleman and Eric was a servant.

That was what Anna Christiansen always said. Julian was a gentleman. It was why Anna had refused to live with Martha and Julian. Anna was never a lady, and knew it. Frances was a lady. The two would have got along very well as servant and mistress. But, having married cousins, this natural relationship was denied them, and they made no attempt to get along. There must be something very special about himself, Martin thought. He could bridge this gap. He was several classes in his own person—several people all at once—the peasant, the great man, the ruler, the ruled. No one, looking at him, could doubt for a moment his importance. And no one, taking a second look, could doubt his origin and—if theirs were the same—not feel kinship.

He received his full papers, finally, making him a citizen of the United States. There were certain things you couldn't do in business unless you were. That was fair enough. You took a living out of the land—you reaped its benefits—you cast your fortune so. A signed promise of loyalty was little enough to pay. Where else could Martin have done as well? He might have become as rich, in some mineral-choked colony. He might have become as powerful, slashing his way to conquest, he might have become the white king of savages. But here, in the land of the free, he had used his freedom to install himself among its civilized rulers. Because it was such men as he, and such as were his associates, who made presidents, who changed governments, or, rather, the policies and laws of governments. Martin was not particularly a drinking man, but in these years, and the years that followed, he became drunk with a feeling of the power that was his. It was a more dangerous intoxication than that induced by alcohol, as it was more logical and more legitimate, and

had for background a clear brain and an unencumbered energy.

The panic of 1893 was long forgotten. William McKinley was president—an easy president with whom to get along. The Spanish-American War loomed and created new demands for iron and steel. The steel from the Lyndendaal mills attained quite a reputation, not only for structural purposes, but for purposes of ordnance. For this last a complete cycle might require sixteen hours, the more deliberate working of the heat enabling the furnace man to bring his metal to the correct analysis without large additions of alloys. But what hurry was there? If you wanted Lyndendaal steel, you must pay for it, in time as well as in money. Time was the more precious expenditure, and you valued most what cost you high—if there was no cheating. Martin, even now, had yet to see or hear of a building made with his steel cracking or settling, or coming to any harm which could be traced to the material used. One or two had been deliberately wrecked, and he himself had bought all the scrap. That was why people treated him with such respect—as they might treat a king—not the man himself, but the crown. And even a crown was a symbol. Steel was not a symbol. Steel was real, of itself.

Martin's steel for ordnance was outside of his original intention. He wouldn't have gone into its manufacture, save for his connection with the Morgan interests. It wouldn't have been policy to refuse. The war, when it came, didn't amount to much. Spain was a long way from her base of supplies and, in any case, pretty well at the end of her resources. There was the sinking of the *Maine* in February, and in April war was declared. It brought several people into prominence, including Theodore Roosevelt. It brought the United States into prominence—particularly in European affairs. It launched her as a world power, which she hadn't been before this.

Martin still had the house at Southampton, which he had taken for Frances that first summer. Southampton was on the way to Montauk Point, and Montauk Point was the point of embarkation for some of our regiments. Martin was at Southampton the day the soldiers marched down the road, singing. When they reached Cuba, the natives there thought their song the American National Anthem.

"When you hear—them bells go ding a ling,
All join round—and softly you will sing
And when you hear them bells—go ding a ling-a ling-a ling,
There'll be a hot time—in the old town—to-night—my bay-bee—"

Martin had a kinship with soldiers. His own father had lost a leg in battle. . . . There was a scandal because certain men had sold the army rotten beef—he would never have done such. But he had avoided service in his native land. This wasn't right, he now felt. He ought to have returned for his term. Axel had served, and got himself discharged because he wasn't very strong. You were never strong when you didn't like a thing. It was such men as Axel who were answerable for Denmark's present defenselessness. Peace, they believed in—peace at any price. Then, however, this matter of peace had never arisen—not between Axel and himself, anyway. Axel had got himself discharged—and been a little clever about it, too, so he had said.

He wasn't being so clever in this country. Or, at least, he reserved his cleverness for immaterial and abstract uses. Possibly his wife was responsible for this confinement. Anna was a very simple woman. The abstract concerned her not. Lines of conduct must conform to her views. Black was black—white was white—gray was a shade for weaklings. As life laid its hand more heavily upon Anna, a certain tolerance came with the pressure. The old puritan was prone to this broadening process, not—like the old rake—enfold-ing himself in a cloak of virtue. But Anna, at this time, was on the fair side of forty, and she was adamant.

In fact, it seemed to Martin, that she was unnecessarily free with her disapproval—and particularly with regard to himself. Though she had a number of reasons for feeling as she did about him. Some were unjust and some just. And one of the least of these last was that she knew, or thought she knew, about Margeretta. Anna and Axel, celebrating some anniversary—birthday or wedding—had eaten their dinner one evening in a small restaurant frequented by Scandinavians of the lower middle class, and found in the place Martin and Margeretta eating theirs.

Martin carried the meeting off with a high and casual hand. Introductions were in order. Axel was calm enough. But Anna looked at Margeretta with the all-seeing eye of virtue, and her verdict was plain. The next time Axel saw Martin he apologized for her rudeness, for it had been rudeness, even though self-contained. "Anna thinks—er—certain things."

"She has no reason to," said Martin.

"None that the law would recognize," Axel admitted, and shrugged the whole thing out of the way. Margeretta certainly wasn't his business. But Martin wouldn't let it go so easily:

"Your wife doesn't like me—"

"Not too much, perhaps—"

"And besides, she thinks I'm a bad influence for you—a bad example."

Axel laughed. "I know she does! I remember when your mother thought the same of me!"

"I shall have to make my peace with her some of these days," Martin went on, "though I know it will take some making."

"You could make peace with anyone, if you set yourself about it," Axel answered.

"If I did . . . Well, tell Anna I'll be coming around for some of that good beer soup of hers. It is something quite unobtainable outside of your house, Axel."

"I didn't do so badly for myself in marrying a cook," said Axel—which was not quite the thing for him to have said, and Martin was sure that Axel knew it wasn't. It might have been subtle payment for a bad half hour, subsequent to Anna's meeting with Margeretta.

Martin would have liked to tell Axel the whole story—defend himself and explain to the last detail. He would have done so, had his cousin been single. Neither of the cousins was single. They were not two boys roaming the pasture land. They were not even two young men chatting with a policeman on the street at night. But the bond between them transcended the limitations set upon it by marriage, or any limitations imposed by the separation of their lives.

Axel's pickle business, which he'd gone into for himself, had not prospered. He got along, but that was all you could say. He and Anna had a little flat in Brooklyn. When you entered the front door, you had to pass through all the rooms to reach the parlor in one direction and the kitchen in the other. A hundred dollars during the month covered all their expenses, and Anna never let a week go by without putting something in the savings bank. She did all her own work, including the washing, and had time to spare. Martin would have liked to believe, honestly, that he envied this way of life. In a sense he did, but he knew that he never again would be content in it. Apart from anything else, it would be for him a confession of failure. Yes, that, apart from anything else, and yet there were other things.

He had grown to expect them. If he rang a bell, it was answered. If he wished to sleep, his sheets were turned back and his night clothes folded neatly to his hand. He was never without a meal or a vehicle or someone to say, "Yes, sir." Soft living it would have been for any man who worked less hard than he did. The work justified it. This giant out of the earth and fire, this steel of his, and all that per-

tained thereto, took any service he could give, and he, in turn, was served. Martin himself was sometimes termed a giant, jokingly by friends, satirically by enemies, and with the proper degree of awe by those who sought his favor. He was big and heavy-set enough to lend the word credence and, when his great frame began to be burdened by some extra poundage, it was all the more apt. In his native folklore, it was seldom easy to distinguish between gods and heroes, Martin knew, but even harder to draw a line between the former and other classes of supernatural beings, such as the giants were.

Martin was no real giant, of course. It was the dwarfs who were known for their skill with metals. But that was all right. There were plenty of men who knew more than he did about steel—men right in his own mills who knew more. That knowledge was what they were being paid for. He knew enough. He had a sort of second sense about it. But what good would it be to know steel, if you didn't know buying and selling, and how to get ahead? That morning—that first one—in the Morgan office, with old Fleetwood having a fit because Martin wasn't more subservient, told the story. All Fleetwood was good for was the law. Each man to his trade.

His son was getting more like him every day. Cautious, like him, careful, close mouthed, and yet—with all that—a quickness and a sharpness which showed his mental eyesight to be of high quality. Fleetwood and Henderson became Fleetwood, Henderson and Fleetwood. As Henderson had been long dead, Tom would some day have the firm all to himself, and it was a responsibility which he was perfectly capable of assuming. The older man always reminded Martin of Lake, the younger one didn't, and yet he was so like his father, who—in turn—was like Lake, in a minor key of course, without the courage and without that extraordinary ability Lake had, to see things whole.

Martin passed the house Lake was building for himself, and would have known to whom it belonged even if he hadn't known it anyway. He had to curb his tendency to stop and ask permission to go in and look about. It was costing a pretty penny, with its marble and its bronze. He heard there was a fountain being designed, to be installed right in the middle of the main hallway—a fountain where goldfish would swim. And the woodwork in the library was being brought over intact from a castle on the Rhine. Lake was having a picture gallery in the rear, strictly fire and burglar proof, and locked up at night like a bank. All the chairs in the music room were from a collection supposed to have been sat on, at one time or another, by Marie Antoinette. Lake and Carnegie were having a row. Perhaps this house was to show that the row didn't matter—not as far as Lake was concerned.

Lake had finally resigned from the Carnegie Company. But he got the value of his stock. Carnegie had been prepared to give him merely the "book value." There was a suit about it. Usually a silent man, Lake revealed in court a great many interesting details—revealed them to the general public, that is to say. Martin didn't have to read the newspapers to find them out. But that happened a little later, that and Carnegie's calling the fight off, and the reorganization of the Company. This reorganization brought neat sums of millions to all the partners. But Martin wasn't sorry he had refused a partnership when it had been offered to him—he was better off as he was. He was a Morgan man now. And no one could think now, as Martin himself once had thought, that steel was not included in the Morgan interests. There were the Federal and the National Tube and many other smaller concerns—including Martin's own—all financed through Morgan, and well financed and well run. It wasn't any time for Carnegie and Lake to have a row—not for Carnegie, it wasn't.

The little Scotchman had never had any competition worthy of the name before. Having it, he needed all the help he could get. Not money, nor labor, nor land, but men like Lake, and such didn't come in dozen lots. Frances thought Lake's new house was sheer display—"One doesn't buy antiques," she said, "in any such wholesale manner—one doesn't make a spectacle of one's front doorstep to form a peepshow for the less fortunate. It's silly." Frances was always saying things were silly.

And it was something more than display, under the circumstances. There was a certain arrogance there which Frances missed. The pillars of the temple were falling, and Lake announced himself as otherwise occupied. He was the undefeated one. And Martin watched all this, and had no reason for surprise when Morgan brought together all the steel under 'one head—Carnegie's included.

Morgan never liked Carnegie, who insisted on calling him "Pierpont," and treating him as an equal. But Carnegie wanted to sell, and he wanted to buy. He paid an enormous sum. He'd have paid more, he told Martin, just to get rid of the man.

Martin had often taken note of the fact that personal likes and dislikes played a much larger part in business dealings than they ever were credited with playing. This stream of human feeling was something you couldn't bridge. Trusts, mergers, great consolidations came into being seemingly overnight, and back of them were years of plotting and planning by a handful of men. The minds of these men were, in some ways, a composite of mind. There were certain qualities which, seeing in 'one, you surmised in all—greed, love of power, love of the game for the game's sake, a satisfaction almost physical in such great use of experience and knowledge. But there was that in all these men which was not mind at all. It was an actuation composed of small personal motives, hatreds and affections, affronts remembered

and now paid off, jealousies, scorns, little cankering grudges and generousities unexplained. Martin supposed the dead unbiased. These men were not dead.

The year the United States Steel Corporation was formed was a great year for Martin. Looking back at it from every possible angle, he would still have to consider it one of the greatest years of his life. His youth was over, of course, but his powers were strong in the ascendant. He had made his place in the world which was his world—intrenched himself—there could be no question of his right to be counted in at the biggest of big games. He knew what he could and what he couldn't do. He was never afraid to say, no, or to say, yes, either. He was making a great deal of money. And he wasn't spending it—not to “form a peepshow for the less fortunate,” nor to take part in the wild speculative frenzy that devoured many men who should have known better.

He and his family occupied a modest residence a bit east of the Avenue, of the type known as American Basement. That is to say, there was no stoop—you entered the front door at street level. They had six servants—or was it seven?—not including the coachman, and a carriage and pair for Frances. That twenty thousand dollar a year scale upon which they had lived when they first came to New York had been left far behind. And yet this present living was much easier for Martin to manage than that had been. Across the river he maintained a separate stable for the very fine team of roadsters he used for transportation from ferry to mill. This was not, on his part, an entirely practical procedure, even though it made him independent of train schedules. The idea had had its roots in Martin's earlier Pittsburgh days. A pair of fast horses to take him to the mill was a possession he had then set his heart upon. Now he had it. These were fast—very fast—and covered the distance in less than an hour. Frances entered them at the Horse Show, in

the roadster class, and won a blue ribbon. This pleased Martin as much as anything that Frances ever did.

But other people, besides young Tom Fleetwood, were owning automobiles now, and Martin was forced into it through sheer weight of time. He didn't want to make the change, but he felt he had to, so he sent the horses to Cousin Henry, with his compliments, and bought a car for his own use. Frances still kept her carriage, and Martin his head, too—even under pressure. He was solid—he was conservative—he was cautious. And everywhere he saw buildings rise which had been erected with his steel.

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The Steel Trust began business on April first, April Fool's Day, as some of its enemies pointed out. The year was the year of Nineteen Hundred and One. Martin was one of the twenty-four directors. He had been offered a position even higher, and said, no. Lake and Rosch were directors also, and no better than he was. Just why Martin hadn't run across either of these men before was the unlikely chance that had worked to give the meeting the background of the directors' table. They must have known that he would be there. Lake was glad. Rosch was only cordial.

It was a curious gathering of men. Nowhere else in the world could you have found their like. They were all successful—many of them were internationally famous. And there were people who called them a nest of thieves. If that were so, it was rather a picked nest, Martin thought. Thieves were men whose aim it was to obtain something for nothing. These men were terrific workers, possessors of terrific energies, merciless to themselves as well as to others. Thieves were cowards. Cowardice was not an attribute prevalent here. Unscrupulousness—yes. This was not a kindergarten

or a convent or a convalescent home. A little group of exceptional men—men who had fought their way, and won. No one was present who could be spared, or who had not something to contribute in knowledge or power or possessions.

Lake came to Martin when the meeting was over and extended his hand—"Well, my boy, you've done pretty well for yourself."

Martin remembered that smooth hard little hand. "Thank you, sir."

"How's your wife?"

"She's fine, sir. How's Mrs. Lake?"

"Couldn't be better. We're giving a reception soon. I hope you and Mrs. Lyndendaal can come."

"I'm sure we'll be very pleased to. That's quite a house you've built yourself. I understand you've sold the place in East Liberty."

"Yes, it no longer met our requirements."

"I suppose not. It was a nice place, though."

Lake smiled his cool and deprecating smile. "I'm afraid you're prejudiced in its favor!"

"Possibly so."

Lake turned away to speak to someone else, but Martin wasn't left alone. Being among the least known present, he aroused a good deal of curiosity. Why was he here? Being here, he could afford to let the question go unanswered. Not that it was asked, in so many words. He and Morgan both knew. He was here because he could get along with Morgan and because of his success in handling labor.

The Steel Corporation was against labor. They denied to it the right of combination—mobilized against unionism. Labor was to be disorganized, unprotected. Martin's own plant was one of the few where labor received recognition. It was valuable to the Corporation to have a man like Martin among its directors—secretly valuable, perhaps, but

valuable. The value was proved again and again, and many of the compromises made later were negotiated by Martin. He had never lost the human touch. Many of the men here had lost it completely, had they ever possessed it. There was old Mr. Rockefeller, mild and kindly, and looking like a dried pod filled scantily with rattling seeds. There was Charlie Rosch, whose human touch had a sort of synthetic quality, Martin always thought. At that, Rosch understood labor better than most of them, but he was now rather farther removed from it than he had been when Martin had worked with him—and for him. Charlie Rosch had risen—was still rising. Martin wondered if the moment would ever come when he would strike his handsome head against the ceiling. Possibly Rosch was wondering the same thing about him, as he boomed a greeting.

But Martin at least knew his own limitations, and where—for him—the ceiling was. He was a man who made structural steel—the best—and he could keep it moving. Anything else he did, he did by the way. He negotiated this and he negotiated that, but it led back to the one road in the end. This end justified any means, including his affiliation with one of the largest corporations in the world. At this time, Martin had no sense of having lost control of his own holdings. He ran his mills in his own way. He stood as squarely on his own feet as any man. He knew he wasn't as clever as some of the men here, or as rich as most of them, but he was one of the youngest, and that fact meant a good deal. It meant at least that now, at seventy-three, he had outlived all but one or two. He had survived. His survival was something he had never doubted. It was a quality in itself. Even though it had now worn a bit thin.

Anything after seventy-three didn't count for much. Martin had no wish to follow in the footsteps of the mild Mr. Rockefeller, who'd just missed the hundred mark by a hair's breadth. It must have been a mummified existence which

the old man had led towards the long awaited end, in that great country place of his. It had been suggested that Martin be moved to the country, the air being fresher there, the grass greener. Denmark was the place for green grass, and even the earth had a fresh fine smell when it lay, turned back in the fall of the year after the root crops had been dug. But what would Martin do in Denmark, now? He was better off as he was, right in this room. Such a splendid room, and so filled with treasure. He could look over at his Rembrandt, which was finer than any picture Lake had ever had.

Lake's picture gallery had been open for the first time the night of that reception of which he had spoken to Martin. Frances and Martin both had gone. They could have done no less, under the circumstances. Most of the steel men and their wives evidently felt the same way. Everything was on a grand scale—too grand. It was like Tiffany's window at Christmas time, with a couple of florists' shops and Delmonico's thrown in for good measure.

"Mrs. Lake's a nice woman," said Frances on the way home, "I must do something about her."

"What are you thinking of doing?"

"She paid me a thousand dollars a month once, so my services must be of some value!"

"You're not thinking of—"

"Of asking for my position back again? No, but I hate to see her making a fool of herself."

It hadn't occurred to Martin that she was making a fool of herself, so he asked for details.

"Everything about her party was wrong. The things which should have been casual had obtrusively been planned, and the other way about, too. Mrs. Lake was very nice to me once, and I'm going to do what I can."

Martin realized again what an unusual woman Frances was, and how unfortunate for himself were the invisible bar-

riers which lay increasingly between them. He had let her get away from him—become, wholly, a creature apart, and no more his wife than she was the wife of Lake or Rosch or Morgan. The great man had met her once, and paid her a series of very beautiful compliments that Martin wouldn't have had the wit to pay her. In fact the attitude of Martin's entire business circle was, in regard to his wife, unanimously congratulatory. Any man in it would have gladly changed places with him—or almost any—and, if they had, they might have made a better go of it. Well, he had no intention of handing her over to any of them, nor she, doubtless, of being handed!

The surface Martin had attained was very bright and smooth, but something deep in him must have coarsened, and made him suited only to Margeretta, and women like her. Margeretta was safely married to the owner of the hat store. Martin had been very fond of her. At least she was a genuine human being. The women who had followed—and there had been women—were a sorry lot compared to her, or compared, either, to Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal. But who did Martin think he was, even to aspire to Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal? How could he expect a woman such as she—so far above him as she was—to move or stir him, or to arouse in him any feeling other than the admiration and respect he had for her in such good measure? She was dressed in white—one of those heavy silks she affected—and her hair was high upon her head, wave on wave. She wore the little diamond pendant Martin had given her after Julian was born, and was otherwise without jewels. Most of the women at Lake's party had been hung with jewels. They jingled as they walked. Frances didn't have to jingle in order to have all eyes upon her.

The carriage stopped in front of their modest residence. Martin got out and helped Frances do the same. He selected the proper key from his key chain and said good night to

the coachman, who drove away with a clatter. There had been a moment of silence following Frances's last statement that she would do what she could for Mrs. Lake. It was Martin who broke this:

"Anything you make up your mind to do is as good as done!"

She turned to him, a little surprised. "Why, thank you, Martin!"

It was a later period of the Lyndendaal glory that always found a manservant guarding the door. Martin had let himself into the house with his key, and its lower floors were as deserted and dim as the street itself. He turned on a brighter light. He didn't like dimness. Which was why he'd had his house so well wired for electricity. He set down his tall silk hat on the hall table, and took off the spring overcoat he'd worn over his evening clothes. Frances drew it from him unexpectedly and hung it up. It would have done, thrown on a chair till morning. But Martin divined that the unhabitual service wasn't prompted, on his wife's part, by a mere desire for order. She had always had faith in him. The happenings of these past years must have justified that faith. Her hanging up of his coat was some sort of recognition of what he'd accomplished—some small gesture of obeisance. There were things he would have liked to do for her, and say to her. He would have liked to talk out all the unsaid trouble between them, but it was late and he'd had a full day. To-morrow loomed.

The trouble with him was that he didn't know what he wanted. He didn't want a drink, certainly. He'd had enough champagne already to float a battleship. He didn't want to turn on his heel and go out again. He could have done this easily enough. Frances wouldn't have known—not unless she were to make it her business to know—which he doubted that she'd do, or be very much surprised, either. His final view of her was as she went up the stairs.

"Good night, Martin—"

"Good night—"

No, he didn't want to go out—not anywhere he'd be welcome, and unknown. The trouble was, you couldn't tell about that any more. People knew who he was, even if they didn't come right out and say so. Nothing he did could be secret. That day on the ferryboat when he had introduced himself to Margeretta by a name which wasn't his could never be repeated—not safely. He wasn't really famous—he had no delusions about himself in that way—but he was just on the edge of being. There was something about him, as well as about what he'd done, that made people remember him—"That's Martin Lyndendaal—he's with Morgan in steel."

It was the champagne he'd had that made him restless. He'd drunk it inadvertently. Footmen kept handing it to him and he'd been thirsty. Lake himself never drank. Lake had the right idea, though it was something more than an idea with Lake, as it made him sick. It didn't make Charlie Rosch sick—merely objectionable. That loose smile of his had grown looser, and he had had a tendency to paw every woman under fifty. Rosch got away with it—he always got away with everything, all his life. And he was going on towards eighty now. Martin and Rosch, the two grand old men, the two living representatives of an era that was over. Why couldn't it have been someone else who had survived with Martin? Axel Christiansen, for instance? It was characteristic of Axel not to be at his beck and call now, any more than he ever had been.

So much of Martin's thinking now was like a difficult unraveling of the little broken threads from the cloth of his remembrance. But that night remained clear to him. It was still so clear he could almost count the stairs which led to his room, and hear the echo of his own footsteps going up. Why couldn't Axel have been there with him, instead

of being—as he doubtless was—tucked away so snugly in his little Brooklyn flat? If it hadn't been for Anna, Axel's wife, Martin would have taken a cab there, whatever the hour, and waked Axel up and made him dress and go with him, and together they would have found some quiet place where a glass of beer and a sandwich would have entitled them to a table at which they might have sat till morning. But Anna wouldn't have cared for such conduct. And certainly Martin wouldn't force it on her, as things were with her. Anna was going to have a child. It seemed she had always wanted one.

With a child were they going on living on what little spare change Axel could pull out of his pickle business? Tomorrow would be none too soon to see Axel about that. Martin would give him one more chance. He had other business in New York to-morrow, he didn't plan to go out to the mill till the afternoon, so at noon he would stop up at the two-by-four importing house on Third Avenue and take the proprietor out to lunch. At lunch they could talk, and Anna wouldn't have to know anything about it till it was all settled. Anna, with a child to think of, might set aside her personal prejudices. Anna was, after all, a good practical woman. So was Frances, for that matter. Martin could hear Frances moving about in the next room. She stepped quickly but firmly, as if she knew where every step would lead her, and then the strip of light beneath her door went dark.

Martin was in no hurry to get to bed. He had found something to think about now. He divested himself of his stiff clothes and put on his pajamas. He sat down in the easy-chair beneath the reading lamp. At his hand was a sheaf of papers filled with statistics on the state of the steel industry in England. Statistics were dry, or would have been if he'd been giving them his undivided attention. But what he was really thinking about was Axel. He had a spot to drop him

in now—an ideal proposition, almost made to order. They were considering exporting structural steel to England. There were bridges being built there in a big way. Of course, importing pickles was not quite the same thing as exporting girders, but the difference Axel could learn. He was so clever.

Martin had it thoroughly set in his mind, exactly what he would say to him. A temporary job—that was all he would offer—something not to frighten Axel and make him think he couldn't get out if he didn't like it. They would have lunch, and Martin would talk. But they didn't have lunch, because Axel refused to go. He was expecting a message from Anna.

"How is Anna?" Martin remembered asking.

"That's what I would like to know myself," Axel answered. "She was forty her last birthday. It's hard on a woman, having her first child at forty."

Martin's bulk still filled the doorway by which he had gained entrance to the shipping room. "You mean she's having it now?"

"Yes, she's in labor."

"I didn't know it would be so soon."

"Neither did we. They promised to telephone me from the drugstore on the corner."

"The telephone's a great invention—how did we ever get along without it?"

"How did we ever?"

Axel was bending over a crate, prying the lid off with a crowbar. He had replied without the attention which Martin was in the habit of receiving. But it didn't matter. Martin drew in his breath, to get his fill of the peculiar salt-sour-sweetness of the air. It reminded him of the old country. Why shouldn't it? Everything in the room came from the other side—even the kegs of butter and the cheeses done up in neat tinfoil.

"Has she everything she needs?"

"I left her so this morning. There's a very good midwife there, and a doctor within call."

"You should have sent her to a hospital, and then she would have been assured of every care. The doctor told me that if Frances had had the boy at home she might not have pulled through. Not that Anna won't be all right—perfectly all right," Martin added hastily.

Axel looked up from the crate lid. "If anything happened to Anna, I could not go on without her."

Martin, who rarely was stumped for an answer, found nothing to say in reply to that rather stark statement, so he plunged into the object of his visit:

"Axel, I want you in my office. I know you've refused me countless times, but I'm not one to stand on pride. I need you—not forever, necessarily, but just on a temporary basis. There is work now. You can name your own figure for it. I have a proposition which I think you'll like—you'd be independent—not under me at all—"

"You said, in your office—"

"That was a manner of speaking. You'd be in England most of the time. Anna would love it in England—and the baby—"

"And what should I myself be doing there?"

"It would be like studying—and you are so good at that, Axel—good at finding out things—and with your present knowledge of the importing business it would be easy for you."

"And what are you planning to import from England?"

"Nothing, as a matter of fact. We wish to export steel. But England is afraid of American steel—afraid that we haven't her interests at heart—"

"Why shouldn't she be afraid?" Axel cut him short.

"It would be for you to establish confidence!"

Axel was checking off the contents of the crate he had

opened, and marking the result on a paper which was probably a bill of lading. Almost anyone could count sardines, or sardine cans, Martin thought. But he didn't say so, or say that this musty basement was no place for an able man to spend his life in. He sat down gingerly on an empty keg, and waited. It would be the last time he would so wait. If Axel refused him now, he would never ask again. Axel didn't like steel. The English didn't seem to like it either—though they'd done so much with it. They'd been making steel for a long time there now, and their best product was as good as any, Martin had to admit, but it was expensive—even more so than Martin's. And there was a tendency in England towards the cumbersome and unwieldy, where conditions suited any mass production. The English didn't want to import steel, the metal being their own child, they resented the American cousin, they begrudged its growth. And grudgingly, Axel and the English would join hands in a natural affinity of distaste. So Martin waited with all this in his mind, and finally Axel spoke:

"No. Martin, you can easily find others to pull your chestnuts out of the fire for you."

"You've been believing what you hear! You would think, to listen to some of the things that have been written and said about the big organizations, that they were run by blood-suckers! It isn't like that at all. I'm giving you an opportunity—"

Axel turned to a fresh crate. "I get along."

"Yourself—yes. You have a family to think of."

"Oh, if I had no family I might come with you, Martin—"

"And why then, in heaven's name?"

"Just for the hell of it. You see, it wouldn't matter so much then, what I did."

"It is Anna—you think she would not let you. But for her child—if she couldn't do for it what should be done—"

Martin was aware that he sounded like a man trying to sell

insurance. But it was insurance of a sort—security. What security could there be in importing a few table delicacies into a country already groaning with food? Axel didn't look well. He was as pale as a ghost, and his shirt sleeves, turned back over his thin arms, were badly frayed at the cuffs. Every penny was being saved to pay the midwife and the doctor and what other expenses there would be.

"If you won't come to work for me," Martin went on, "can't I do something? Call it a loan, if you like—"

Axel refused that, also. "If I wouldn't work for you, I surely wouldn't take your money without working."

A grubby boy came in. He had tousled hair, and a pencil stuck in it. "Telephone for you, Mr. Christiansen."

Axel's thin long figure described a sort of comet-streak up the stairs. Martin was left alone, sitting on the keg—alone with the insults he was quite aware he had received. The keg was not a comfortable seat, and the object of his visit had signally failed of accomplishment. And he had plenty of business elsewhere. However, common courtesy demanded his remaining to hear the news, if news there was. And he had another reason for staying—that curious second sense of his, that instant recognition of the presence—impending or otherwise—of a juncture to prove to him important. A firkin of pickles was open near by, emitting an odor pungent and appetizing. When Axel returned Martin was meditatively biting into a pickle. The brine from it had dripped onto his necktie and made a stain there.

Axel's face, formerly so pale, was flushed. "Anna's all right," he announced. "But you'll have to excuse me—I'm going home."

"Is it all over?" Martin asked, getting to his feet.

"All over."

"God bless you!" His own phrase reminded Martin of an omission. "You can't go home without drinking a health to the little stranger."

Axel smiled. "We drank a health once before, Martin—remember? With Anna waiting on the church steps?"

"I remember it well. Come—there must be a place near here."

"There's a good one, right by the steps of the elevated station."

The cousins seemed to have forgotten all enmity or insult, and dashed up the stairs to the street level where the office was. Axel got his hat and coat, and nodded to a man who was working at a desk. It had evidently been prearranged that he should leave when his message came.

Arm in arm, they walked to the corner where the saloon was. Axel spoke to the bartender in Danish. After a moment, the man brought out a bottle and poured from it lovingly two measures of liquor. Martin reached in his pocket and, instead of the usual silver, came forth with a large bright coin which he spun on the the counter.

"What's that?" Axel asked. He really wasn't thinking what it was, you could tell from his tone.

"It's one of the twenty-dollar gold pieces the directors of the United States Steel Corporation receive when they attend meetings."

The bartender, who had been listening, was not impressed. He picked it up and examined it with unflattering closeness, took it to the man in the cashier's cage and discussed it further, and finally returned.

"I don't believe we can change that here, sir. Not that it isn't good, but haven't you anything smaller?"

Martin, passing the drink that was ready back and forth beneath his nostrils, smiled at the man reassuringly. "That's very good *akvavit*—"

"The best there is, sir."

Martin gave him a dollar bill. "Will that be all right?"

"Of course, sir—"

The cousins stood and held their glasses high, touching

the rims smartly. They had a way of doing this which was like a salute with swords.

"*Skaal!*" said Axel.

"*Skaal!*" said Martin. "To the boy!"

"Oh," said Axel, "that reminds me—it isn't a boy."

"To the girl, then."

"To the girl!"

"*Skaal!* And luck be with her."

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What difference could it have made to Martin, whether it was a girl or a boy? That is to say, how could he then have been conscious of such difference? But he was, or he now liked to think he was. How could he then have been aware of a half-lifetime of waiting, and then know, suddenly, that the human creature who was the object of such expectancy had at last elected to enter the world? And the waiting—known or unknown—wasn't over yet. That assurance on Axel's part, there at the bar under the elevated station on Third Avenue, could have been but a momentary lifting of the curtain which Fate in her kindness ordinarily keeps well closed. It was all mixed, somehow, with the bartender's return of the twenty-dollar gold piece, and Martin, seeing the coin lying there on the bar, didn't know what to do with it. When Axel wasn't looking, he slipped it into Axel's coat pocket, wondering as he did so if Axel would be angry when he found it.

The old wives had a phrase for how Martin felt when Axel spoke so casually of being reminded that it wasn't a boy. He felt as if someone were walking across his grave. Though it was perhaps, more accurately, like a momentary congealing of the blood, caused by the reception of some wave length undiscovered and uncontrolled—transcending time

and space. Those who may upon occasion have received such, would accept it without too much surprise, as Martin did.

Besides, the girl certainly was not like Minerva, who had been credited with springing—full grown—from the head of Jove. For many years she would be of no possible interest to anyone but her parents. Martin would have no cause to give her another thought—particularly as he was not in the way of visiting the Christiansen household. He remembered no occasion on which he arrived, his pockets bulging with lollypops, and dandled a child on his knee. Neither was Anna in the way of dropping in for an afternoon, Martha by the hand, and taking advantage of the increasing glories of the Lyndendaal nursery. Martin would hardly have been present if she had. Thus the additional waiting, which was a state quite outside of any personal realization. There was, on Martin's part, no conscious impatience, no blankness that could or could not be filled. Fate again dropped her curtain. As for time, it was only now that Martin was filled with a complete understanding of the trick time had played on him. Martha was born thirty-five years later than Martin was. They ought to have been of the same age, or nearly so. They ought to have grown up together. It should have been Martha—not Axel—on the Christiansen farm.

And yet, how could that have been so, as Martha was so basically the child both of Anna and of Axel? And she was a product of her own generation, her own environment, the country which birth made hers. A peasant girl on the Christiansen farm could not have been Martha. And would such a girl have made the wife for Martin that Frances made? Fairness to Frances compelled him to say no. This Fate of his, who was such a hand with curtains, willed on him a success he might never have attained if the cards had fallen in any sequence except in the sequence they did fall. He could say to himself all he liked now that Martha would

have meant more to him than any success—he could say it, but had no proof for the statement.

Martha, he had since learned, had been a difficult and wilful child, rather unprepossessing in appearance, quite lacking in that light charm which had been so evident in her father. She had been rather silent and self-contained—not one to make friends easily. “She always wanted to grow up,” Anna once told him. “She didn’t like being a little girl—and was scornful of childish things—toys and such.” She, too, may have felt this time-mistake—not understanding it.

She must have been an odd child. But she may have found the world an odd place. People would think now that the world had treated her extraordinarily well. Martin never thought so. It was hard on a woman, having a mind like Martha’s. A woman’s body was no proper housing for it. Motives, understandable in men, were responsible for acts which, in a woman, didn’t work out. She had fallen in love with Julian, and married him and been the strong one, and—because she was strong—she had lost him. He wasn’t much to lose. But she hadn’t lost Martin—what there was left of him. He clung to her like the old man of the sea. He knew what he ought to do. He ought to die while she was still young enough to gather up the fragments of her life. His dying would be scant return for all she’d meant to him. Why couldn’t they have been young together?

But when he was thinking of Martha he couldn’t think straight. And he must think straight. Thought of her crowded out too much that was important, and couldn’t be left out of any thinking. He must piece together those long years when all he had of her life was the bare knowledge of it.

There was the matter, first and foremost, of Martin’s money. He began to accumulate a surplus of money, beyond his normal needs, or the needs of his mills. It re-

minded him of those early days in Pittsburgh when he found himself receiving a wage he couldn't spend—not until he'd figured how. But, at that time, the ways in which spending would advance him were obvious. Now, he wasn't sure. As it was, he had about all he could attend to, what with the mills and the various negotiations which he was constantly being called upon to handle. The money bothered him. If it had been more—if it had been some vast aggregation of capital—but it was merely a sum constantly increasing beyond any ordinary use. It lay idle—or approximately idle. He'd been in the habit of buying stocks. Wall Street had been his chief source of income in the days prior to Morgan. Stocks usually went up. Well, if he got enough money together he might do something about it. There were men he knew who liked nothing better than to manipulate money, constantly launching new campaigns of expansion. There was Harriman, for instance, wanting to own all the railroads in the world. Martin's own reach had a narrower range. No one man could own all the steel in the world. Carnegie had tried it.

Martin was very much surprised when the stocks he had bought began to go down—devastatingly down in the panic of 1903. Such a thing had never happened to him before. He sold, losing a considerable fortune. With subsequent money he was more careful, and bought articles of a less ephemeral nature, such as the house in Newport. Being interested in hospitals, he built a very fine one for the use of Scandinavians in this country. He began to buy pictures and furniture. Not in quantity, the way some men bought them, but just here and there. Frances advised him about that. He never thought of himself as being rich, because so many men he knew were richer. Money was comparative. Power was what he wanted, and power he had. Money followed power—was tied to it by a rope.

According to the standards of their kind, the Lyndendaals

lived simply. Frances had a horror of what she called vulgar display. She was unimpressed by marble for its own sake, or diamonds the size of cherries, or footmen in powdered wigs. She demanded perfection only. And money could buy perfection if you knew what you were buying. The fact that Martin didn't really care about money was one of the reasons that he got along so well with certain people with whom it was very necessary that someone get along. A case in point was his friendship with the new president, Theodore Roosevelt, who had been catapulted into office on the assassination of McKinley.

Roosevelt was too radical. The Morgan interests didn't like him. He did a good many things they didn't like during his seven years in office, making trouble for their railroads, resurrecting the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, objecting to what he called the Wall Street point of view, and being upheld, not only by the Supreme Court, but by the public. Martin never really had the Wall Street point of view. He could talk to Roosevelt, as man to man, and did so, frequently. He even went to Oyster Bay to see him, where the president spent his summers, surrounded by his numerous family. Roosevelt's place there reminded Martin of a boy's camp, a gentleman's country estate, and the setting for a political picnic. It had the elements of all three, with something over. The food was plentiful, the noise deafening, the company mixed and the service flawless. There was one Sunday dinner, never to be forgotten.

It was before the time of the Newport house. Martin and his family were still at Southampton. It was on a Saturday that a casual telephone message came inviting Martin and his wife to come over the following day. Frances had never met the president. She hastily cancelled all other engagements. The Lyndendaals arrived after the long drive. Their new fine car was soon an object of some interest to a group of small boys, obviously of Roosevelt extraction. Dogs

yapped. A tall woman with an agreeable though slightly worried smile appeared from the house and stilled the clamor. You felt she didn't know, ever, what might happen next. Her husband was on the place somewhere. He was expecting them. There were a number of other guests. They appeared from docks and tennis courts—even from churches—at the approach of the dinner hour.

That dinner! There was room for about twenty people at the long table. Roosevelt came in late, like the star of a play. He waved his hand at the assembled company, some of whom rose at his entrance and some of whom didn't. He sat down, coatless, and was immediately served. Between mouthfuls, he described his struggles with a tree he was engaged in cutting down.

"Finest exercise in the world! Did you bring a good sharp axe, Lyndendaal?"

"No, sir, I forgot."

"You have one to grind, I'll bet!"

Martin led the laughter.

Roosevelt looked about the table and his eye fell on Frances. "Who are you? Don't remember seeing you before."

Frances rose and made a slight bow. "I'm Frances Lyndendaal, Mr. President."

The president indicated Martin. "*His* wife?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do you think of that?"

People seemed to come and go a good deal during the progress of that meal. Messages were brought. The president left the table more than once and returned. Huge moulds of ice cream replaced the beef which had been the main course.

"Are you a Dane, too?" Roosevelt again addressed Frances.

"No, sir, I was born in Maryland."

"Any children?"

"Three."

"Good." He turned to Martin, "You'd never think it, to look at her. How's the steel business?"

"Good," said Martin.

After dinner, Martin and Roosevelt sat on some stumps in a little clearing of rather scrubby seacoast woodland and discussed government and money and labor. They particularly discussed just how far Roosevelt would go in his measures to curb what he called the tyranny of wealth. The president was a reformer, Martin knew, but he was also a practical man. His Dutch merchant forebears had been practical men. But there was something in the man—a white heat of opinion—which was not practical at all in the ordinary meaning—and it was this quality which gave him his power and his strength. Many of Martin's associates hated him—they regarded him as a deadly enemy—a political adventurer who was interfering in their personal affairs. Martin didn't hate him. He didn't always agree with him, but he didn't hate him.

"You fellows," he said to Martin, "think we can fix things up. Send your lawyer and my lawyer and fix things some way so I won't bother you any more. I don't want to fix things up! You fellows have started out over the country with seven-league boots on. I'm around to set bear traps wherever I think they're needed."

It was an important conference, though it was a little difficult for Martin to realize its importance. There was no dignity, no form. There was no ante-room in which you waited, no guards, no suitable minion to usher you into the Presence. The United States was a crazy country, Martin thought, even if it was the land of his choice. He remembered puzzling over it from the very beginning, and particularly from that beginning when he first had been married to Frances. It would always, in some degree, be a

puzzle to him. Occasionally he would have an idea about it which would be like the opening passages of an explanation, but that was all. Yes, a crazy country—and so big. Big enough to bear its craziness. It was only the little countries that must be completely sane, logical and orderly, in order to survive. Space was a breeding ground for error. Martin wondered about that. It was said, as things were now, that it was these same little, sane, orderly countries that would not survive. They were the ones over which doom hung the closest and the lowest. They had bartered all error—and all strength, too—for a certain kind of useful practicality. And this would never stand up against disaster. That had been already proved.

It was during the very early spring of 1907 that Martin returned to Denmark for the first of his many visits to it. It was close on to twenty-five years since he had been there. He was sixteen when he had taken ship. He was nearly forty when he went back. And, taking that into account, it wasn't a considered pilgrimage.

He must go to England on business—a quick trip of a few weeks perhaps, which was all the time he could rightly spare. But once in England, and his business completed, the North Sea beckoned. He'd been in Liverpool, Sheffield, London. From London, by train and ship, there was a method of reaching Esbjerg. He communicated with his brother Karl, and was on his way. He passed right through Odense, never stopping, and, before that, he went close by the old Christiansen farmlands. It was all new, and yet he'd never left it—any of it. It was so small, he could have put the whole country in his pocket, and yet he was a lad again. But his youth was so long over, so very long. Why, he wasn't even the man the lad would naturally have grown to, but a different one altogether.

The weather was cold, and he wore a greatcoat, lined with fur. People stared at him. They didn't know who he

was. People in Sheffield had known, and in London—even in Liverpool. But here he was a stranger, a man arisen out of the sea, coming back like something magic. He had the right to come back, if he wanted to.

At the railroad station nearest the farm a young man spoke to him: "Are you Uncle Martin?" he asked, in Danish.

"Yes, I am. And you?"

"I am Karl."

"You mean you're Karl's son."

"Yes, of course. My father received your message, but his best cow is very sick. He couldn't give the day to driving to the station."

"I should not expect it," said Martin.

"There is much work on a farm."

"Yes, I know," said Martin.

The drive home was accomplished with long intervals of silence. The country hadn't changed much. But it was growing dark, and Martin couldn't see it as clearly as he would have liked. They stopped at the barn gate. A young girl ran out of the barn door and down the path to the house, calling, "They're here!" Martin lifted his bag out of the wagon back, and then a middle-aged man appeared from the house and came towards him.

"Well, Martin, you don't know me, do you?"

It would have been hard to say how it was that Martin knew him. There was nothing to remember. But there was no doubt in his mind who it was. The brothers shook hands and went into the house together. This was the same kitchen, and Martin had just left it. A stout woman was setting out food on the table. There were children who stared, and the young girl, who was quite a pretty girl. Martin went to wash, and to leave his bag in the room he would share with his oldest nephew. It was the room his brothers had had in the past, smaller than the main bedroom, which was now occupied by Karl and his wife and the youngest child. There

was yet a third room for the girls. That had been built on since Martin's time. His brother's house was a good house, and it had not changed. But Martin couldn't help this mixed sense, that he had never left, and that he had never been there.

And these people, whom he did not know, had for welcome only curiosity and a certain duty towards a wandering kinsman. He shouldn't have come. He had put them to trouble. They were friendly enough—as they would have been friendly to any stranger. There was much talk. Peter was overseer on a big estate in Jutland. There was hardly a living for two families here, Karl said. Axel Christiansen's father was doing well, and did not show that he was getting old. The aunt in Odense was still occupying the same house. She took in several lodgers now, and still sewed when sewing offered. Odense was very prosperous, with all the big ship-building companies.

"It was always active that way."

"Yes, you would know that."

They spoke of the inn where Martin had worked, and from which he had fled.

"There was some story about that," said Karl. "You had worked there so long, and you were dismissed so suddenly."

"It is a story, evidently, that our mother never saw fit to tell you—"

"No," said Karl.

"You left," said Karl's wife. "No one knew where you were for a long time. Then Karl got a letter from you, and a photograph, and money."

They went on to other matters, and the fine headstone for the mother's grave which Martin must see in the morning.

"Oh, by the way," said Karl, "a letter came for you. It was brought here by a special messenger this afternoon. It has a crest upon the envelope, and I almost forgot to give it to you."

"You would forget your own head," said his wife, "if it were not fastened firmly on your shoulders!"

"In America do women talk so much?" Karl asked.

"They talk more," Martin answered, laughing.

That letter rather saved the day. Though it was, in a way, a petty satisfaction, showing it to them. To-morrow Martin must go to Copenhagen, to Amalienborg Castle, where the King lived. Martin was almost as surprised as Karl was. What the King wanted to see him about, and how the King knew he was here, were questions to which he had no answer at hand. He would find out, all in good time. It made him a little angry, how the family's manner to him changed, as if it took the invitation of a king to impress them, and, without it, Martin was merely a rather scapegrace brother. They wouldn't believe that he hadn't known about it in advance: they thought he'd stopped off to see them merely because the farm lay on the way to the palace. Martin assured them that this was not the case.

"I haven't even the proper clothes with me. I left a second bag in London, as I'll be going back through there."

"Oh, King Frederick won't mind," said Karl's wife. "They say he's a man of very simple tastes. Besides, the Court must still be in mourning for King Christian—"

"Now there was a king for you," said the young Karl. "I saw him on horseback once—you'd know who he must be without any mistake! But King Frederick is just like anyone else—any fine gentleman, that is to say."

"It is kind of him to send a car for you to-morrow—at eleven, the letter has it."

"Very kind," said Martin. He thought to comment, what with the sick cow and all, it might not have been convenient, otherwise, for him to reach the palace. But he held his tongue. The buzzing around him was like bees after honey.

"I hope you haven't forgotten what to say to a king," said his brother, "after your long years in America."

"Oh, not at all," said Martin. "It's only since I've been in America that I've learned!"

But that they didn't understand. He could see the bewilderment lying back of their general pleasure.

At eleven the next morning the royal equipage arrived. It was very much like Martin's own car at home—not quite as new. There were two men on the driver's seat and, in the enclosed body of the car—all very warm and cozy with fur rugs and a charcoal heater—a middle-aged man was sitting, so quietly that Martin had thought the car empty, except for the servants. Discovering his fellow passenger, he started back a little.

"Get in, Mr. Lyndendaal, get in!"

Martin already had his hat off, fortunately, and his head bent from the necessity of negotiating the door frame. He had no time to hesitate about what he would say to a king.

"The day is fine," said King Frederick—"almost a touch of the coming spring in the air—I thought I would like the drive. We can have a good talk. At Amalienborg there are so many things to be done, always—"

"Your Majesty—"

No, he was not one's idea of a king, this smallish man with thin grey hair and a pale face. But he was not like anyone else, either. He had a peculiar polish of person and manner, as though he had been rubbed for many years by smooth stones, and gently waxed, and rubbed again. And, from time to time, dusted very gently. He was like something seen behind glass. Martin felt gross beside him.

"I want you to know, your Majesty, how much I appreciate this honor."

"Denmark is honored by your success. We heard you were in London, and inquiry there brought out the fact of your present journey. You had come so near—it was an opportunity not to be missed. Denmark cares greatly for her sons who have the spirit to go forth to the newer coun-

tries and carve a place for themselves. We need the goodwill of those countries. We are so small and so old. They are so great and so young."

He was having a speech made to him, Martin realized—just to him. He felt extraordinarily lacking in worth. They chatted then less formally, and the king asked a great many questions about labor and politics in the great new country. He was fairly well informed already. Martin was a practical man, only, but he told him what he could. He explained that he had had little time to study either the theory or the history of such matters.

"Naturally not! You, and such as you, make history. And a theory which cannot stand against practical use is no theory at all. What interests me very much is your own so rapid rise. Here you are a peasant. You attain on ship-board some smattering of engineering knowledge. But it is still as a laborer that you arrive. In a few brief years you attain power. If you had made a business of politics, I could understand it better. Among our Social Democrats there are men who have risen by little more than a will to rise, combined with a happy facility for swaying the multitude. But you did not rise in that manner."

"The element of luck," said Martin.

The king talked of President Roosevelt, whom he greatly admired. "A man such as he does much for the world," he said. "He it was who had largely to do with bringing peace between Japan and Russia."

Martin had not thought of Roosevelt as a world figure, exactly, but so he must have been. Several years after this, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize at Christiania.

The drive with the king was all too short. There were so many things to talk about. Martin had almost forgotten himself, and his own importance and his own origin. The king knew he was a peasant. He knew that anyway, and would have known it. Martin's Danish was of the farm, and there

must have been other signs the king would recognize, and which, in the United States, might pass unnoticed. But, if they had not passed so, these might have mattered more in the United States than they mattered here, or mattered to Frederick the Eighth. He and Martin were two men together, of different worlds, and for these brief moments their worlds joined. It was, for Martin at least, like being given a view of a horizon farther than was normally within the sight of his eyes. It was the thin fine air of mountain tops, and yet pleasant and, in a sense, homelike. There was that simple homely gesture of the king's, as he brought something out of his pocket.

"Here—I want to give you this, Mr. Lyndendaal—I'm afraid I might forget it—"

It was a little white cross that he held in his hand, edged with red and gold. The cross was attached to a white ribbon with a red border. Martin looked at it, as he might have examined any ornament displayed for his admiration, and then it sunk through to him, what the king had said—"I want to give you this—"

There in the confines of the car, what was he supposed to do? There was no space to kneel.

"It's the Knight's Cross of the Dannebrog Order," the king went on, "given for your services to Denmark."

"I have performed none," Martin managed to protest.

"There our opinion differs. What about the fine hospital you built? But, more than all, you've done a great deal to bring Denmark to the attention of the new world."

"Do you know that I'm an American citizen?"

"This is an honor permitted to foreigners."

Martin had taken it now. He turned it about in his palm. It bore in the center the letter V and, on the four arms of the cross, the inscription, *Gud og Kongen*—For God and King.

"I can't say how I feel, your Majesty." Martin couldn't.

He was utterly incapable of saying. He was incapable even of thinking. And this was the country where no one knew him. He could not say what he felt, but he said a strange thing—or something the king must have thought was strange: "It is neither right nor just."

The king was smiling. "We try for justice, Mr. Lyndendaal. We seldom achieve it."

The car had stopped at a gate of wrought iron. It was a simpler smaller gate than the one through which Martin had so often passed to enter the grounds belonging to Jonathan Lake, at East Liberty. But there were two sentries who stepped smartly out of their sentry boxes to open it. Lake had never thought of that one.

22

All this happened a long time ago. But it wasn't lost. Nothing ever was lost, but held and ready to flash out suddenly, with a distinctness like something seen from the street in a lighted house with the shades up. And it often didn't concern Martin any more than any such view would be apt to concern the passer. It didn't concern him—not even when he saw himself basking in glory, or losing battles, or putting unanswerable questions to a withholding Providence. Not even when he saw himself in print.

The news clippings someone had taken pains to collect had turned brown with the years. You had to be careful how you touched them, or they would crack and crumble to a flaky dust, like the dust given off by the wrappings of mummies.

"Martin Lyndendaal returns from Europe. One of Mr. Morgan's Steel Barons denies knowledge of the tightening of the money market. Says Americans have much to learn from English steel."

"Martin Lyndendaal visits King Frederick the Eighth, of Denmark. It is said by friends of Mr. Lyndendaal that the King conferred on him some very high honor. But this he refuses either to deny or to confirm . . ."

One of the less friendly papers published a cartoon of Martin with a lion's body, peering into the open door of a cage where Morgan, as trainer, was surrounded by other hybrid creatures. From Martin's mouth floated a question—"Now, Master, I've fixed it all up with England and I've fixed it all up with Denmark. What's next?"

As a matter of truth, Morgan had had everything to do with Martin's visit to England, but nothing whatever with his Denmark excursion. Morgan was accused of a hand in everything. Morgan and Roosevelt—they were the two great names—if it wasn't one, it was the other. Roosevelt was going right on trying to break up the Trusts. He acted, so many of Martin's friends thought, a good deal like a small boy raising hell in a toy shop. There was considerable name-calling on both sides. This was the great figure who was so potent in world affairs.

What next for Martin? There were a great many things which were next for him when he returned from Europe. There was an unrest in the air. Building programs were curtailed—orders cancelled. Martin was glad that he had invested large sums in tangible assets, like the house he'd bought in Newport, which was even now being completely done over to suit Frances's taste. He had also purchased several parcels of real estate in New York—including the lot on Fifth Avenue, site of the house in which he still was living. He had bought that land in about 1906. It lay vacant with a fence around it, and continued so to lie for a number of years. He paid taxes for nothing, and received no income from his investment, but it was his. The fence was painted grey, and had a neatly lettered sign—**POST NO BILLS**. And then he had something that had cost

him nothing—a little white cross with a red edge, and striped with gold.

His children were growing. Sarah and Fanny were at a fine school and doing well. Julian was beginning to be a source of trouble outside the comparatively safe confines of the nursery. It occurred to Martin that time was an inexorable task master, rolling on, whatever you did, and carrying you with it, never letting you rest or wait or return. Not until you were really old did it permit any of that. And when you were old you did nothing but wait, like a cat at a deserted mousehole. Frances's two brothers were grown men in 1907. Gordon married a girl whose chief claim to notice was that she played very remarkable tennis. Martin had found him something suitable in Wall Street and, for the moment, he was doing fairly well there. Jack had gone into horse breeding with Cousin Henry and Cousin John on their place near Meadow Mountain. Martin doubted that he would ever amount to a great deal, but he liked him better than he liked Gordon. He always remembered Frances's brothers as he had first seen them, two children sitting by a window and giving all their attention to their new rifle. Why did human beings have to change so much, and so rarely come up to the potentialities within them? There were the two Lake girls, who had made very creditable debuts in society. The younger one, Helen, was very pretty. There was talk of her marriage to an Englishman of title. The older one, Florence, was quite seriously minded. Suitably chaperoned, she was studying art in Rome. She took a great interest in her father's collection.

Frances had kept her promise to herself, and done a great deal for Mrs. Lake, who—of all these people—had changed very little. She was still forthright and kind and, at heart, simple. She was pleased with her marble palace, but you felt it wouldn't have mattered to her if the earth had swallowed it—or mattered only because of Lake and her daugh-

ters. Martin once heard her spoken of slightly, as a woman who bought her way into a position she would never have attained otherwise.

"Let me tell you something," Martin replied. "Mrs. Lake is a woman who honors any position she attains. I should think you'd be very proud to know her. They don't come like that—not very often!"

The critic retired, abashed.

In June the Lyndendaals, or, rather, Frances and the children, moved to Newport with a good deal of fanfare. The house there was very lovely, as though grown by due process of nature from the rock, and with wide vistas looking to the sea. There was no sense of its having been done over, or that a fortune had gone to the doing. It was simply a country place where people of taste might take their ease. The Lyndendaals had always been such people, so what more natural? Martin, coming down there for a day and a night, could almost believe this himself. If he clutched his white cross close enough to his heart he could believe anything.

The summer was uneasy. Men were aware of something wrong, much as animals are aware of distant yet approaching fire. The bonds of the City of New York failed to find a market. A large Utility Company went into receivership. An Electric Company failed. An attempted consolidation of shipping collapsed. Investments were turned into cash on every side, and men hoarded the cash. Vast sums of money disappeared from circulation, as if they'd been stuffed beneath mattresses. Mr. Morgan was in Europe, buying everything from watches to Bibles. He was getting old and he wasn't in very good health. It was said, he was thinking of retiring from active business altogether. Morgan had a house in London, at Prince's Gate, which was a veritable museum. In September, he returned with a million dollars' worth of treasure which lay for a long time, in unopened

cases, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of which he was president. His passage through New York was brief. He was on his way, as a lay delegate, to a convention of Episcopal clergymen in Richmond, Virginia. For him, that too was brief. He was sent for. Panic had broken loose.

Martin remembered the panic, not for any specific moment, or instance of disaster, but for the terror that gripped the particular world in which he had his being. It was catching, this terror. At first you could ignore it. You could say that the worst that could happen would be to lose everything, and have to begin all over again. Steel would still be made, and it would be bought, as food would be bought, or shelter. And then you began to think that you couldn't begin all over again, that no one could, that there would be nothing left for a beginning.

Banks closed, people fighting at the doors. At the Stock Exchange all sales stopped. No money could be borrowed. People died from terror. Sometimes they died from their own hand, not being able to bear any longer the strain of living. Morgan didn't die. He was seventy years old his last birthday, not in very good health, ready to retire, and he was the one man to whom all turned. He saved the country, and all these little people. He sat in his fine library, with his pictures and his books, and played solitaire, and scribbled notes on little pads. He sat very much as Martin was sitting now, and he was nearly as old then as Martin was now. But he had, still, something to wrestle with and something to command. Speaking of luck—there was luck for you!

Steel was not forgotten. Six million dollars' worth of the stock of a rival concern had been pledged by a brokerage firm. The banks would have none of this stock. But they would accept United States Steel. Now, if United States Steel could take in this other concern—well, such a purchase would help stay the panic. Some of the steel men were not

in favor of the deal. It seemed no time for buying. Roosevelt might make trouble. Roosevelt was against the corporations, whatever they did. And they couldn't have trouble with Roosevelt—not now. Martin was one of the men who went to Roosevelt and received from him the assurance that there would be no trouble. It was a great stroke of business for everyone.

The rest of that autumn was occupied in sweeping up the debris. The terror receded. There had been no terror. A year afterwards, save in certain cases of individual ruin, you would hardly have known that anything had happened. Men whom Martin had seen, with his own eyes, shaken and stricken, settled back to an upholstered calm. Gordon Calverton, who had positively drooled in anguish, paid up his dues at the Racquet Club and started going there again every afternoon at five. What had Gordon ever had to lose, except the custom-made shirt on his lean back? But now it had been a bad dream everyone had had, and from which everyone had waked.

There were minor disturbances to upset the general well being. There were labor troubles. The power of labor had grown much stronger—the public and political power—and the great men didn't have things quite so much their own way any more. And Roosevelt went right on making a row about it. When he went out of office many of the big companies were practically under indictment. Not steel. Steel survived. It was charged, at last, that the government was shielding the Steel Trust, and under the lash of this criticism a suit was brought. Fleetwood, and many other prominent lawyers, thought that the case could be settled without a trial. But that wouldn't do. The government finally filed its petition that eight of the subsidiaries, as well as the Steel Corporation itself, be held unlawful monopolies and dissolved.

The case was tried in New Jersey before four Federal

Circuit judges. Martin was in the thick of it, and emerged triumphant. A committee of Congress was formed to investigate the concentration of control of money and credit. Samuel Untermyer was the head lawyer. Morgan didn't like him. They'd had a quarrel once about the purchase of some collie dogs. Untermyer had bought them when Morgan wanted them. It was the kind of thing Morgan didn't forget, so he went to Washington and testified, at some inconvenience to himself. He also emerged triumphant. The case dragged on after that, and was interrupted by the War. Eventually the Supreme Court decided against the government. But Morgan wasn't alive then.

That first decade of the twentieth century, adding the few years before the War, formed a distinct period in Martin's life. For the benefit of his thinking it could be treated, as it were, in the mass. And yet it had a sequence, a sort of growing splendor, a rising triumph. With the exception of his losses of 1903, he couldn't lose, whatever he did. Whatever he got into, he would escape with a whole skin. Or possibly his skin was of a thickness impervious to pricks. Of his private and personal existence, so much could not be said. In some instances the privacy was hard to prove.

Margeretta had been a secret sin, if you like. The successors of Margeretta were not secret. They couldn't be. Though none of them had any real hold on Martin. There was safety in numbers—three or four at one time, all within a few months, and then the pressure of his work would tighten and months would go by without women's concerning him at all. He didn't want to be concerned. And then suddenly he was again. He had no illusions. There was no love about it. Women amused him, they rested him, they took his mind off his work, so that the part of his mind given to his work could gather refreshment. And in New York, for a man in his position, there was such a wide choice. It wasn't like the early days in Pittsburgh, but like fishing in

a stream where all you had to do was to cast a line in order to catch all manner of fish. Any you didn't want, you could throw back, and you couldn't want most of them. There would be an occasional surprise—something which shone and caught the eye and intrigued the spirit. And if they wanted too much of you, you could always say, no, and go away. Martin was quite aware that if he hadn't been married he would have had to be far more careful. Marriage was called a tie—nonsense—it was a release, if you wanted it that way.

There Martin's cards were, face up on the table. Take it or leave it. He made no promises. He employed no lures and no wiles. He was, at no time, a wild beast stalking unsuspecting prey. He never concerned himself unduly with women who didn't know their own minds. And sometimes he paid a good deal of attention to women who knew them very well—so much so, in fact, that no motive of seduction was ever permitted to enter into the picture at any stage. They were the dangerous ones, curiously enough. They were the ones with whom he might become seriously entangled, and reach as close to love as, during those years, he ever reached. He had been almost too close for comfort, more than once, in such cases. But you didn't have to love if you didn't intend to love, and the urge was never strong enough to vault barriers. Martin always possessed a great scorn for the ungirt loin.

The most dangerous gossip of which Martin ever found himself the victim grew out of a friendship of this latter type. Martin's attentions were misunderstood, not by the woman herself, but by everyone else, including her husband. It didn't make sense that a man like Martin should think so much of mere companionship that he should spend hours of his precious time in the society of a woman who had nothing material to offer. As to this lack, Martin would have denied it. Mrs. Palmerton had a great deal to offer. She had

some very interesting things to say. It was to him a new point of view. And he would always much prefer to get an idea from talk than from a book. She was clever, she was charming, she cast light on many subjects. She evidently never thought of Martin as a man to be afraid of, or suspected him of motives which, in her case, he was quite willing to set aside. She liked him and he liked her. That was all, and it happened to be a great deal.

Mrs. Palmerton was an artist, a painter of miniatures, whom Frances had commissioned to do miniatures of the girls. Sarah was about sixteen at this time, Fanny, of course, something more than a year younger. Martin picked the miniatures up, as he would be apt to examine any new bibelot, and was held by the surety of the likenesses. These bits of painted ivory were Sarah and Fanny—more so than they were themselves—two young girls, the one smiling and plump, the other serious and with that curious withdrawn quality Sarah always had. No matter what Sarah ever did, she did it lightly, as though with part of herself, and no matter what she was ever put through, she made you feel that to her it was of no great consequence. All this of her was in the little picture.

"Who is this woman," Martin asked, "this woman who gaily charges five hundred dollars for a portrait you can carry in your pocket? I think I'll have her do one of me—she might show me what I'm really like!"

"If she did that," said Frances, "I should think it would be worth more than five hundred."

But Mrs. Palmerton refused to raise her price. She would have executed the commission for nothing, she later told Martin, the execution being such a pleasure. Martin Lyndendaal on ivory, three inches by five, and yet all there.

"I didn't know I cared so much," he said, looking at it. He referred, obviously, to the portrait, not the pleasure.

"Cared for what?" The painter asked him that, a bit quizzical and amused.

"For everything."

He was painted relaxed and at his ease, sitting in one of his own heavy chairs, and yet there was the potential present both of speed and of strength. That's what he must have had, to get where he'd got to. The thing was a far cry from the photograph he'd sent his brother from the ship, and yet it was the same man—possibly more terrifying. The mould had set. And through the disillusionments of living, the force still held. It wasn't much to go through life with, Martin thought now—speed and strength and force. Any good animal has those things, from the pig in the pen to the rhinoceros on the African veldt. He was tempted in his thought to change the metaphor. Such animals would not seem a happy choice to denote speed. But it would be the massive beast that covers the ground at a rate, hiding the swiftness.

His visits to the omniscient painter did not stop with the few brief sittings. Thence the gossip and even a threatened divorce suit, which Martin faced with the blandness of an easy conscience. The husband was made to see at last that he could prove nothing. His wife forgave him his suspicions, and his concern—both, perhaps, proof that he still loved her. That Martin didn't happen to was a mere chance. He could well see that she would be a woman easy to love.

This era of Martin's life, to be thought through now so easily in the mass, was marked by women and riches and work and honors. There were some things which might have been better, of course, such as his relation with his wife. Worse, too, this might have been—much worse. Their son, Julian, was the only matter on which they ever approached to quarrel. And there was so much in their life together, or, rather, in their life not together, about which most wives would have forced a quarrel. If Frances had done so, there

was a chance it would have been a good thing—it would have cleared an atmosphere which never was wholly without cloud. Frances must have known a great many things about Martin which she never discussed with him. Even Eric had admitted that about her. Take that story Eric had told Martin—right here in this room—about the woman named Katie Marlin, who had threatened to sue, and been tricked out of her threat because of Frances's knowing.

The gist of it was that, in matters like that, Frances was free to follow the dictates of her excellent mind. Concerning her son, she found no such freedom. Julian was not a credit, either to her or to Martin. Frances must have been aware of this, but her indulgence of the boy was something which she seemed to be unable to help.

Julian was a big strong boy. Doctors' examinations disclosed nothing wrong. There was no reason why he shouldn't get along well at school. But he didn't. He refused to do the required amount of study. He took but a half-hearted interest in the school activities outside of study. He was markedly unpopular with his classmates and his teachers. One Head Master, with more temerity than tact, in suggesting that Julian be removed from the sacred precincts, stated baldly that Julian was a spoiled brat. He was proved to lie, to cheat, to disobey the rules, to bully smaller boys. "I do not run a Reform School," wrote this brave man, "and if your son were not who he is, that is the type of institution towards which he would gravitate."

Martin showed this letter to Frances. She read it, and tore the paper into small pieces.

"I told you, that man's school was no place for Julian! Fancy—a place run by someone like that—"

"He's a man of very fine reputation—and if he can't do anything with the boy—"

"He probably hasn't bothered—not that I should let him—now!"

"He's not exactly begging you to let him. He probably has other pupils who repay his bothering better."

"You always wanted a son," Frances said, after a moment's silence. "Well, now you've got one."

"My specifications should have been more exact," Martin replied.

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Martin's specifications . . . In most ways they had been so much more than met, that sometimes his life had the kind of unreality which forces a pinch to prove no dreaming. Magnificence—that was the quality with which he, and all that pertained to him, seemed to be surrounded. And yet it was not a false or a meretricious magnificence. Trust Frances for that. The house at Newport was hardly magnificent at all at first glance. And this present city house of Martin's, where he still was living, and which he had built after several years of ownership of the empty plot, was solid and great and fine—but you had to be in it an hour or so, and do a certain amount of exploring, before its full grandeur met the eye.

That was part of Martin's luck, too—getting it finished well before the War. He built it at a moment when he felt he could hardly afford to use the money so, and yet, if he'd waited, he might never have built it. Not during the War, surely, when workmen were at a premium, and not after, as the spoils of profit—the visible sign of ill-gotten wealth. He was glad he'd built it, because he loved it so much, and for many reasons. There was a dignity about it. It represented a dignity, not only of itself, but of living—the kind of living which he, Martin, the farm boy, the porter, the stoker, the puddler, was able to provide. Not that Martin had ever really been a puddler, but he liked to think of himself as such.

Things were different now, including the more delicate

differences concerning only the allegedly fortunate. And things were growing more different yet, day by day and hour by hour. What the future held, no one knew—not even Martin. There was the past, the present and the future, and that sort of limbo—that near-past which he must still call *now*, though it was not exactly what he meant, usually, when he used the adverb. It was the near present, if you like, and many of these changes had come before that. The winter, two or three years before, when Sarah's daughter, Sylvia Mattiabelli, had been introduced to what now was called society, how different it had been from the season of Sarah's own debut, for which this great house of Martin's had been completed in time.

That top floor—all one great deserted space at present—had been one of the finest ball rooms in New York. It had been as fine—if not as large—as anything at Delmonico's or Sherry's or the Waldorf or the Plaza. The entire west wall was made of glass. The roof was glass, also. On clear nights, with the lights lowered, the stars could be observed. It gave you a sense of being suspended between earth and sky. At the east end there was a balcony where the musicians sat, and under this a little staircase leading to a room on the floor directly beneath, where casual refreshments could be had. The conservatory was there, and cloak rooms. An elevator could take the guests direct to the ground floor, for purposes of entrance and exit, and to the dining room, where supper would be set out.

In later years, when the Lyndendaals had no possible use for a ball room, this top floor was used for a picture gallery. It wasn't even that now, since Martin had given most of his pictures to the government or sold them. The elevator still ran, of course, as it was still in use for the lower floors. Up to quite recently, Martin had had Eric help him to the shaft and open the elevator door. It was pure fancy, hearing faint music echoing down the steel enclosure. There was no music

up there—just emptiness, and dust allowed to gather, though Martha had it cleaned occasionally. It was as if the house had been cut off at the top, sliced away as you'd slice the crust off bread.

Martin remembered Sarah so well on the first occasion of the ball room's use. She was all in white, Frances deciding to be dignified in black. It was later that Sarah developed to the full her peculiar charm. At eighteen she merely gave a promise of it. She was never the beauty that Frances was. It was difficult to sort out from the attention Sarah received, how much of it had then been for her background and how much for herself. At thirty, it would have been all for herself. At twenty-five, even, if you'd dropped her on a desert island admirers would have sprung from the sands, but not at eighteen. She had none of the pink and white prettiness that blossoms early. She had a certain style about her, she danced beautifully, she wasn't a fool, and she was the debutante daughter of Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal. Her father was a steel king—one of the Morgan men—close friend of Lake. There were plenty of young men who found Sarah charming. And it didn't matter to Sarah very much what they found. She was removed from competition, both by the accident of birth and by the period in which she was young.

With Sarah's daughter, Sylvia, the situation was wholly different. A young girl must fight for her place now, no matter who she was. Money helped. Looks helped—especially if the looks were of a sort to show up well through a camera lens. But there were plenty of rich girls with looks, and there were plenty of girls with looks who weren't rich who—through some little shrewdness, and a base of hard-used fortunate connections—made the pinnacle of success an uncertain perch. It was all strangely important, as the men involved were mostly of no consequence whatever. Presentable young men were at a premium. There were lists of them to be had, lists gleaned, annotated and kept up to date by a few clever women

who made a sort of business of it. Harried hostesses ordered men as you might order wine. Martin wasn't given to understand that the young men were usually paid for their presence. But someone was paid. Reliable and specialized mailing lists were never to be had for nothing.

It was from Sarah, Sylvia's mother, that Martin received his information on these fine points. Sarah was naturally disgusted, but if you wanted to play the game now, that was how you played it. And a girl like Sylvia managed to have a good time—in spite of the competition which her mother, Sarah, had never had to meet. Sylvia removed herself from it after a year. She took a course in interior decorating and had just recently opened a shop, together with an older woman who knew the ropes and would do the actual work. Her stepfather had been amused by the idea and put up the money for it. The place seemed to be doing well, so it was said. Besides money, Sylvia had what was known as contacts. That was how things were in the world to-day.

It all made Martin realize that he had reached a place once which now no longer remained to be reached. It was something which had once existed, like a bright star in the sky above his ballroom, and he had climbed to it and held on for almost as long as it was there. But it would be a mere clutching at empty space now, even to attempt such a grasp. There had been ways of living then, which Martin had learned, and to which he had adapted himself. There had been a certain moral code which he didn't consider that he had ever transgressed. Set the clock on from 1910 to the present and the near-present, and none of these things existed—not even the moral code, or at least not the same one. Would anyone now have expected him to confine his companionship with Mrs. Palmerton to just that? No one in a circle comparable to the one in which this companionship had had its being—or would they? Martin wasn't sure.

Immorality had existed then quite as much as now. But

it had been called then by its proper name and kept, in a measure, in its place. Martin didn't have to get his information on this from Sarah—or from anyone else. Yes, in its place—and there were plenty of places where you didn't look for it, or didn't find it if you did, or found it rarely. It was true enough that Sarah's own skirts had not been so spotless, but at eighteen they were white as the driven snow. It was after her first marriage, and her divorce, that the Countess Sarah had elected to pay herself back for her unhappy venture in what coin she chose. And that was later—that was the beginning of this present era. And whatever Sarah may have done, she did with grace, Martin didn't doubt. People didn't believe in grace any more. They believed in frankness. He had heard his grandchildren, Sylvia and Matthew, discuss matters which he himself would have hesitated to introduce in any mixed company.

This present generation made no secret of sex. In fact, they were rather proud of it, and took a little the attitude that it was a phenomenon non-existent before their time. Immorality was unnamed because the name was obsolete, the thing itself as extinct as the dodo. That was what this present generation said. They said sin thrived in the dark places, like germs. If there were no dark places there was no sin. Martin wondered about that. It was like the clothes people wore now—or the lack of them. A woman's body was no less a woman's body because it was encased in a bathing suit which could be sent anywhere for two cents in postage. That was all right. The less clothes people wore, the more they would have to keep their bodies fitted for exposure. It would make in the end for a finer race, or it would, if the sight of so much human flesh constantly about didn't remove the possibility of any race at all. Martin had heard of a tribe of savages that went absolutely without clothing. This tribe was dying out. It was a dilemma not yet come here, and when and if it ever did, it would not concern Martin. It didn't concern him now,

save as an abstract speculation. But he was old, and his weariness about the thing was legitimate.

What he was getting at was that in 1910, or thereabouts, it had not been entirely legitimate. For a number of years prior to this, he had had for himself what would have been considered a high old time. He had worked hard, but he had played hard, too. Then the intervals when women were less than amusing to him came to be of longer and longer duration. Sometimes he was guilty of forcing an issue—not forcing his attentions where they would be unwelcome, but forcing in himself a kind of interest he didn't genuinely feel. He used to wonder at himself, and wonder if he were getting old. He still liked women. He liked them very much. He liked the sound of their voices, and what they said and how they looked. At a distance, he would be diverted by the tilt of a hat brim or the tap-tapping of a pair of heels, or the way a woman's shoulders sloped from her neck, or how a bright curl caught the light. And nearer, too, a smile and a soft cheek and the feathery alightment of an eyebrow were all pleasant things to have about. It was very agreeable to be made much of by women, and feel yourself the object of their admiration and their solicitude. That outer office of his, with half a dozen girls bent over typewriters, working for him, being paid by him, spending one-third of their twenty-four hours in space which belonged to him—that room never failed to win from him a nod of approval, a glow of inner pleasure.

It was said of him, with a lift of the eyelid, that he employed on the feminine side only youth and beauty. That was nonsense—or nonsense in the way people would like to think. He never had anything to do with the girls in the office. And there was the glaring exception to prove his innocence of intent, Miss Bellows, his secretary. Miss Bellows came to him in the year 1908—she was about forty years old at that time. She was all the school teachers and the old maids of the comic papers rolled into one. No man had ever

looked at her with any stirrings of desire or appraisal or curiosity—least of all, Martin. But she had a brain like an acquisitive filing cabinet. She had come to Martin with a good background of experience and he had paid her thirty dollars a week—then forty—then fifty. During the War he offered her more and she refused it. She gave rather odd reasons for her refusal at that time, but it was possible that she wouldn't have known how to use more than fifty—she who knew so much about steel and construction and financial policies. Later, during the boom days, she was willing to raise her salary—that salary, paid in full, even after the retirement that Martha arranged for her. But this last took place just a few years ago, and her trip around the world. Miss Bellows died in Paris, which was an unexpected place for her to die, somehow. Martin would have liked to know more of the last years of Miss Bellows' life, but she wasn't a person on whose privacy you intruded.

Martin's thinking of Miss Bellows now, and bracketing her in that sense with other women, was as close as she ever had come to the gay life. It was a vicarious closeness. Vicarious—that was the word he'd been looking for, to set straight for himself his particular kind of interest in women during this period of which he was thinking. He'd wanted them, he'd needed them, he'd had them certainly. And then he'd begun to regard them a little bit in the abstract, as though he would depute to others all the sweat and fever. This bored him—even the approach to it bored him. He would have liked to be more sure, then, that it was entirely a boredom of the mind. He didn't want to be growing old before his time. There had been a tree like that on the old farm. It was a fine strong beech, of the same planting as the rest of the grove, and something happened to it and the sap in it all went dry, and it withered and rotted, and spring by spring less leaves came.

Martin didn't love anyone—that was the trouble with him. Not his wife nor anyone else. Steel was his mistress. What

woman could be compared with that white incandescence, that molten stream, or the cold shapes which could be thrust against the sky like climbing skeletons? He loved his house because of the steel in it—the first house to hold so much of it. And, because of steel, he had made a great fortune and become a great man. What more could there be? Well, there was the war that broke out in Europe and all the new uses to which steel must be put. What variety the metal had, what changes could be wrought in it to suit every purpose! Experiment could be unending.

But in 1910 there was no war, nor in 1912 either, when Roosevelt broke up the Republican party. Roosevelt ran on his own ticket and wasn't elected—neither was Taft. Wilson, the Democratic candidate, came into office. Wilson was a writer and a college professor. He had been governor of New Jersey. No one knew just what he was going to do. He was—self-styled—an idealist, an apostle of something called the New Freedom. He talked a good deal about moral inspirations lying at the base of all freedom, and about the rights of humanity. America must guide the feet of all mankind to the goal of Justice, Liberty and Peace. And yet there was trouble with Japan and rather serious trouble with Mexico. Business could have been better. Business, or the "Interests," as the group which included Martin came to be called, didn't entirely trust the Democrats or Mr. Wilson. Now, with Roosevelt, you knew where you'd find him; even with Taft, Roosevelt's successor, you knew where you wouldn't find him; but a man like Wilson might be anywhere. He was self-centered, ambitious, obstinate, and he was as slippery as an eel.

Martin happened to know that armaments were greatly increased in all the major European countries. In 1913, in fact, there was talk of a general European war. It would never take place—it couldn't—not a general war—but there was talk. Possibly there had always been such talk. There was

no love lost between the countries in question—not ever. They were jealous of each other and they were fearful. And they were practical. The American diplomats abroad at this time were not practical men. It seemed to Martin that they were mostly writers, like Wilson himself. How could you trust a writer—a man who could change the world to suit his taste by the mere scratching of a pen? Wilson threw a nice little local bomb out of his window in July of 1914. He entered suit to dissolve the New Haven Railroad merger and called for the indictment of its directors. If it hadn't been for the War, he might have made much more trouble than he ever was able to get around to making—more trouble locally, that is to say.

But there was a war—this war that would never take place. For a few days there in July, and a few days in August, you could do nothing but listen to the giant footsteps stalking down the road, heavier and heavier, until at last the ear was deafened by the thunder.

European securities were selling in increasing volume. The London Stock Exchange suspended trading, and a few hours after—on that last Friday of July—the New York Exchange closed. The flood of selling was too great. The Secretary of the Treasury was sitting up all night with financial men, devising ways and means for keeping the nation going. And then hell broke loose, the thing had happened, and a lot of men were trying to say that the sword was drawn for peace. Even Wilson talked of peace, but then he was always talking of it. There was talk—more talk—about German militarism. The German army was ready, certainly. The Germans had always been a practical people. There was talk later of a munitions embargo, but there was a practical side to that, too. Someone had to make munitions, and sell them. The Allies themselves couldn't make enough. They were busy with their fighting. Here every mill and plant was running, full blast, to supply the needs of battle.

Morgan was dead, Carnegie retired with his millions—giving them away, hand over fist, and making ineffectual gestures for peace. But Lake went on, Rosch went on, Martin went on. People spoke now as if the Great War were the fault of these men, these makers of steel. As if these same men had set loose some subtle deadly poison of war propaganda, to the one end of lining their own pockets. The pockets in question were already lined. But the present theory held that the munition makers of the entire world, including all steel men, were formed in an unholy alliance to create a use for the thing they could make. Their agents went about fomenting strife.

All Martin could answer to that might be stated briefly: if it were so he had been too busy to hear of it. It had been a world activity which must have gone on behind his back, or when he wasn't looking. The war certainly created tremendous new demands on the industry with which he had cast his lot. He had taken immense orders, and filled them.

It took awhile, of course, for the munitions supply here to develop. There had to be extensive alterations in plants geared to other types of work. There was a dearth of mechanics trained along the proper lines. There were difficulties of all kinds. But the contracts continued to pour in, and in less than a year things were moving. We sent a hundred and fifty armoured cars over on one ship, and rifles and lighter ordnance. When the *Lusitania* sailed on the voyage that would prove her last she had forty-two hundred cases of rifle ammunition in her hold. That wasn't much. It was nothing, compared to the human cargo she carried. Martin had friends on board—his old friend, Jimmie McMahon, for one, the Irishman who built tunnels. And there was a man he was sending to London, regarding some details of a contract. The sinking of the *Lusitania* was for Martin, as it was for a great many other people, personal disaster on a scale. Nothing like it had ever taken place before. Nothing like

it, at all. And yet, technically, the Germans were within their rights to sink a ship carrying munitions to the enemy. It was stupid, perhaps, it was a mistake, strictly from their point of view.

Some time in June—or was it July—of the same year J. P. Morgan and Company signed a contract with England and France to become their purchasing agents in the United States. The firm received a commission of one percent. During the entire war, they bought something over three billion dollars' worth of goods on behalf of the Allies, and, as the Allies didn't have the money to pay the bills, the firm raised it by selling bonds. It was too bad the old man—old Morgan—had died. He would never have made a loan like that, with no tangible security behind it. And yet he might have. He once went on record as saying that he'd loan a man anything if he had character. No one ever accused the English of lacking character.

Martin thought at the time, and he thought now, that the increasing flood of munitions which we were able to send to the Allies kept the war going, and, if it hadn't been kept going, the Germans would have won. This output, which this country could—and did—produce increasingly, was produced at a profit. Prices rose to such a point that, even with the higher wage scales and higher production costs, money was made. No one denied that—not Martin nor Lake nor the others. They made weapons by which men were killed. They profited in human blood. And now they were accused of desiring the war to continue and the blood to go on flowing so that they might profit more. The accusation had the virtue for belief of containing a percentage of truth. At least it wasn't something you could deny too flatly, or care to say too much about. But it was putting the cart before the horse. In Europe neither side really wanted peace—not the Allies nor Germany. Both sides wanted peace with victory, and—for victory—were content at any moment to stop the blood

from flowing. That was what war was—blood. And when the blood made threat of drying, war's ending would come. That was the great secret. There might have been other secrets whispered to Martin and Lake and the rest of the men who waxed so fat on carnage. But if there were, the noise in their mills would have closed their ears. The armour plate must resist the bullets and the bullets must pierce the armour plate. And the steel ribs of battleships must be calculated to a nicety for strain and stress. That was enough for any men to see to.

If the war had ended sooner and the Germans had won it—as in such case they would—it might, in the long view, have been better than the present situation of the world. The world was not a safe place any more. No part of it was safe. As Eric said, this man Hitler . . . Hitler was the symptom, not the disease. There were always plenty of men like that, but they didn't reach to power—now they did. He'd been an Austrian paper hanger, with a gift for getting along, and no scruples. And he'd been helped every step of the way by men who should have known better. Martin had known quite well some of the big German industrialists who had helped him to his earlier successes. Where were they now? Out of his range of fire—that is, the lucky ones.

Oh, the world was safe enough for men like Martin, whose number was already up. Nothing could happen to him that hadn't happened already, except that he would die in his bed there in the next room, with doctors and nurses about, and what remained of his family, and everything being done for him that could be done. Martin wasn't thinking of himself when he thought the world wasn't safe. He wasn't even sure that this room, this house, this little group of people who immediately surrounded him, were in any imminence of danger. That was it—he wasn't sure. And how define danger? It seemed to him that people did nothing but attempt to define it, this month of September, this year of nineteen hun-

dred and thirty-nine, when he himself was occupied merely with facts which had long since resolved themselves.

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The past—this past of Martin's—was a warm cloak against the cold. It was a bomb-proof shelter into which you could go, and be safe. It was a little piece of cotton with which you could stop your ears against unwelcome sound. The sound was bedlam—all the great voices—all saying things that didn't match. Their continual talk cut in on Martin's self-imposed task, his concerns, which were not their concerns—because, whatever they were talking about, it wasn't about him. This new war, which had finally been declared after so much preamble, had nothing to do with Martin. England and France had waited, and they had waited, and they had watched Hitler, as negligent trainers might watch the course of an animal escaped from the zoo, and now they had decided to go after him. The pacts they had signed and the agreements they had made hadn't worked. They had played for time. Well, it was their own time now.

And, speaking of pacts, the Nazis and the Communists had signed a pact which surprised a great many people. Out of world affairs as Martin was, he had lost a good deal of his capacity for surprise. He accepted the fact that anything might happen during this new—this other—war. It might even be that the Great War, the World War, would fade into insignificance beside it, and would itself come to be known merely as the other war. But such speculations belonged to the future, which was not for him.

Martin had been in the thick of things during the first war. He seemed to have no private or personal life at all, and few private memories. He wasn't then, as he was now, removed from everything but the prospect of death, and living

in what memories he could summon. And yet there was an incident which raised its modest head sufficiently to deserve recall, an incident which had little to do with the turmoil of his living.

That hospital of his, the one he'd built in Brooklyn for the benefit of his fellow Scandinavians, was never quite forgotten by him. He visited it at intervals, no matter how busy he was. Sometimes these visits were semi-official in character—board meetings and such—and sometimes they were casual and unannounced, just because he wanted to see the place. It was his one major charity, and sight of it refreshed his spirit. He could enter tired and harried, and go away with his head high and his brain clear. There was no patient there, he felt quite sure, who received one-half the benefit from it that he did himself.

He had a mill now on Long Island as well as the one in New Jersey. It was near Jamaica. And, driving back from it one early evening, instead of going directly home, or at least making Manhattan his objective—he directed his man to veer south, to fulfill a sudden wish of his to enter the sacred portals of his beneficence. It must have been about eight o'clock when Martin arrived. The night-superintendent was on duty. He told her not to trouble to take him around, he knew the way. But she would have none of that, and refused to be done out of her hour of glory.

With voices suitably lowered, they visited the men's ward on the second floor. Most of the men there looked up from their beds with a passing curiosity. They possibly thought Martin some distinguished surgeon. Few of them knew who he was, or recognized him at all. One did. Martin was aware of a steady and interested stare, and returned it in kind.

"Why—Axel—by all that's holy!" Martin excused himself to the superintendent and crossed to where Axel lay looking up at him.

"Well, Martin, how are you?"

"It would be more important to ask, how are you? And what brings you here?"

Axel's face was so thin it was a mere framework for the skin that covered it, but he still could smile. "What brought me here is no longer with me. They took my cancer from me a week ago."

The superintendent had carried over a chair. Martin sat down. "Why didn't you let me know? You must have a room to yourself—every attention. I suppose no one here has the faintest idea that you're my cousin!"

"I saw no reason to tell them."

"That does not excuse me," said Martin.

"For what?"

"For my neglect. Here, you have been ill—very ill—and I knew nothing of it. It is by chance that I come upon you—"

"There's nothing you could have done. That's the trouble with you, Martin, you do too much for people." It sounded like a compliment, but the way Axel said it, somehow it wasn't. "I've been very well treated here," he continued. And then he did pay Martin a compliment: "This hospital of yours is a fine place. You should be proud of it."

"Don't think I'm not. I have good people here—that is what counts." This last was delivered for the benefit of the night-superintendent, who had a tendency to hover. It pleased her. Martin's next words didn't please her so much. "Would you mind leaving us, Miss Norstrom? I would like to speak with Mr. Christiansen."

"You mean privately?"

"That's it. I believe the visiting hour is not yet over?"

"Not quite. But of course with you, Mr. Lyndendaal, that wouldn't matter."

"I would never take advantage. And now—if you don't mind—"

Miss Norstrom had no choice but to turn away then. "I'll be in my office," she said.

Martin nodded. "I'll see you there before I go."

"You'll see her there," said Axel, "and arrange about my having a private room, I suppose. I don't want one—I'm quite comfortable as I am."

Martin was a little angry. "Why is it that you'll never let me help you, Axel? It would seem natural—cousins as we are—"

"Partly for the good of your soul, Martin, partly for the good of mine, and partly for our souls together, between which the connection is pure."

"I'm afraid I don't understand you."

It was obvious that Axel didn't expect him to, though he didn't say this—it would not have been courteous. What he said, instead, brought them back to earth. "Possibly, having chosen my own path, I see no reason to have someone else remove the stones."

"It isn't as if you had come to me for help—I offer it, freely."

"I know that. But if I ever come to you for help, Martin, it will not be for myself, but because I can no longer do for those I love what I should do."

"I'm afraid Anna would accept help from me even less than you would!"

"I wasn't thinking of Anna."

"How are things with you now? Have you been ill for long?"

It must have been long, Martin decided. Axel's hand, which lay on the neatly turned sheet top, was paler, if not whiter, than the cotton. It had the translucent glassy color of flesh which had long lacked for any movement to send the blood through it. Axel moved it now, opening and shutting it, and watching the gesture as an infant might watch early efforts of a similar nature.

But he denied any extended period of illness. "I began not to feel well, and Anna made me go to a doctor. He sent me to other doctors—specialists, they call themselves—and

then I came here. I shall be all right soon, and back at work again."

"Hasn't the war affected your work? Importing foodstuffs would be not so good, even though the Scandinavian countries are neutral. And even though you only sell them, you cannot sell what you have no means of getting."

"I don't sell foodstuffs any more."

"No?" This surprised Martin. The last he'd heard of Axel, his own business had gone under and he'd found himself a position as salesman for a bigger firm—and he'd been doing fairly well, too.

"No. For this past year I've been with an organization of which you, Martin, would not approve."

"Does that matter? You've made it plain for a long time that our roads took different turns."

"Now that is more than ever true. It's why I've avoided seeing you."

"But why—what difference—" And then: "This organization, of which you say I would not approve, will hold your job open for you, I suppose?" That was the important thing, after all, to learn what the sick man's circumstances were. Any direct assistance would be refused, and yet something must be done.

"It's not a job in the ordinary sense, though I get paid. It's connected with a party in Copenhagen—the International Socialists." The International Socialists had become, in Denmark, fairly powerful. It was a group distinctly on the radical side, but Axel had always been radical in tendency. He went on: "They have launched a movement to compel peace by workers' pressure. There's much to be done here. We wish to stop, particularly, the making of munitions."

Martin laid his great hand over the hand which lay upon the sheet. "That is something I doubt if you will be able to accomplish! But the Germans would love you for it if you succeed."

"It doesn't matter to you, then, my working for an organization with such aims?"

"Of course not. You must work for whom you please."

Martin could see, the way his cousin looked at him, that he did not greatly like his unconcern. Axel would have preferred argument and anger. There was too much, on Martin's part, the attitude of brushing away a buzzing fly, or a moth which would be soon drawn within the flame, in any case.

"I suppose if the war goes on long enough," said Axel, "and certainly if the United States gets into it, your son will go?"

The change of subject seemed sudden. "If this country gets into it, I suppose he will. He's a big strong fellow, and I don't see what else he could do. Why?"

"Under the circumstances," said Axel, "I suppose you would be forced to send him."

"What circumstances?"

"You make guns. Therefore your son would have to take his chance before the guns other men make."

"His mother might have something to say to that."

"She would oppose it?"

"Very bitterly. In fact, I don't think Julian himself would like the idea too greatly." Martin laughed a little at that, and he could see Axel didn't think it a subject for laughter. But Axel didn't know Julian.

He didn't know that a good army training might be the making of Julian, and that the chance he might have to take before other men's guns would be, in Julian's case, worth the risk. Julian was eighteen. They were hoping to get him into college. There was nothing wrong with Julian's brain, it had been proved, but getting into college was so much effort. And Julian knew he'd get along, whatever happened. There was a tutor Frances had heard about who had a way with the soft sons of rich men. He had a camp in the mountains where boys such as that led a sort of prison-farm

existence, and were crammed with knowledge wholly against their wills. The Lyndendaals had pinned their hopes on the tutor, but war might be better, Martin thought.

Whatever he thought about Julian always left him with a bitter taste. The boy was one of the few cracks in the beautiful smooth eggshell of his own ego. And now it would be like Axel to bring up the unwelcome subject. Axel lying in a ward bed, ill and without money, still kept a power over Martin, and could exert it without any apparent effort. Speaking of brain, Axel's was a mechanism swift and keen and mobile. What had he done with it? Nothing. If Julian had been Axel's son . . . Well, if that had been so, perhaps Martin would have had some kin to take into the steel business. He, too, could change the subject:

"And that girl of yours, how is she? How many years is it since I came to your shipping room and you received word that your girl had been born?"

"Fourteen," said Axel. "Martha is fourteen."

"Fancy that! The last I heard of her, she was starting to school."

"She's still in school. She won a scholarship at Safford Institute. She has two more years. You must have heard of Emanuel Safford?"

"I thought he built elevators."

"He does. He also endowed a school. It's quite an honor, getting a scholarship, but Martha's very clever."

"I'm sure she's clever. She wouldn't be your child, otherwise, Axel." Martin saw Miss Norstrom signalling him from the door. He rose. "I mustn't tire you."

Miss Norstrom came over then. "I'm sorry, Mr. Lyndendaal, but Mr. Christiansen isn't very strong yet."

"I know. I'm leaving."

Farewells were brief. Out in the hall Martin explained to Miss Norstrom that he had wanted to give Mr. Christiansen a private room, but Mr. Christiansen wouldn't take it. "We're

cousins, but for some reason best known to himself, he would rather not have the fact known. He has always refused me the privilege of helping him in any way. Pride, I suppose . . . Will he get well?"

"One never can be sure with cancer. If you'll wait a moment I'll look up the records."

The records proved indecisive. Martin obtained the name of Axel's surgeon. He was a comparatively young man, who had recently joined the hospital staff, but Miss Norstrom gave assurance of his competence.

The next time Martin called at the hospital, Axel had been discharged. Inquiry revealed that he had made an exceptionally rapid recovery, and was back at work again. The Danes were a sturdy race. They had always survived against odds. There was no use in Martin's going to see Axel at his home. He'd made it clear enough, God knows, that he and Anna could both do without Martin's company, and Martin would hardly be welcome at the New York headquarters of the International Socialists. Besides, his going there would cause talk—might even make trouble for Axel—and he had no wish to do that. His cousin had trouble enough, as it was. Or was it trouble? Being poor and working at something you believed in, and having a good wife and a child who was a credit to you?

He knew old Emanuel Safford, who built elevators. He knew him to speak to at directors' meetings, and the construction engineers with whom Martin was connected had occasional business dealings with him. He wasn't the sort you would think of as endowing a school. It was said of him that his loose change was glued to his pocket. He rode to his office in the subway, and when the cuffs of his shirts became frayed he had them reversed by the family seamstress. He smoked five-cent cigars—which he named as his one self-indulgence. It was rumored that Mrs. Safford went into the area-way every morning and counted up the eggshells in the

garbage can. He was as saving of words as of money, so when Martin spoke to him, his first care would be—and it was plain in his eyes—not to commit himself. Martin wouldn't have spoken if he hadn't wanted something—that was plain, too.

"A cousin of mine has a girl at your school."

"Three hundred of 'em are there—"

"I understand—it's a very fine school. Christiansen, the name is. She has a scholarship."

"Must be bright."

"I gather she is."

Martin tried to talk further, but didn't get very far. It was weeks later that the two met again. Emanuel sidled over to him.

"That cousin of yours who has a girl at my school—"

"Oh, yes," said Martin, "what about him?"

"Don't know anything about him. But about the girl. She is bright. Thought you'd like to hear."

That impressed Martin. If Emanuel Safford said that Martha Christiansen was bright it meant something.

"Did you ever see the child?"

"Just to hand her prizes on the platform."

"I understand she has two more years."

"That's right. The last two years I give girls like her a good business course. Oh, don't open your mouth! She won't go into your office. The bright ones I pick off for myself."

"I suppose you get 'em cheap," said Martin.

"Not so very. Just a couple of dollars under the market. Why not?"

"Why not indeed? You have to get something back on your investment. That doesn't leave them very much leeway for fripperies, does it? Two dollars under the market—"

Emanuel turned away. "This girl ain't the frippery kind. That's another thing I like about her."

"I can see," said Martin, "I'll have to work fast if I decide I can't run my plants without her!"

"I'm not worrying."

"You needn't. I doubt that her family would let her work for me. We're not on very good terms. I just happened to run across her father one day, and he told me where his girl was going to school. Outside of that, I haven't seen any of them in some time."

Emanuel turned away in earnest then. "You could do worse than see 'em!" he said to Martin.

The advice was sound enough, Martin knew, but the opportunity to follow it up never seemed to arise. At that time, Martha was just a name to him—he'd never so much as laid eyes on her—and any real responsibility concerning her, or her problems, or how bright she was, was distinctly not Martin's. Martin had his own family to consider, and his care for them must come before his consideration for those whose lives had ceased to touch his. As a young man he had deliberately taken that family on. He had been eager to take it—lain awake nights wanting to take it. And it still existed, unrepudiated and at his guidance. What little thought he could rightly spare from the demands of his labors belonged to his wife and children. He was the captain, they the ship, but his hand at the helm was a hand that wrote checks—nothing more. Half the time, as the years went on, he hadn't even known what the checks were for—he hadn't cared. And the checks he wrote were such large checks, the smaller ones not coming within his province.

Immeasurably, Martin's wife had furthered his career. She had a kind of shrewdness, the kind he didn't have, and therefore needed and could use. Her household moved on greased wheels, in an effortless luxury which was the art that concealed art. You never saw the wheels move. Frances had a talent for that sort of thing which a head waiter might have envied. It was on the human side that she was always

a little blind. Martin could have seen the blindness in her if he'd troubled to look. But he connected it then only with their personal relation and didn't realize that it extended in any way beyond this. And—beyond this—it wouldn't have mattered so much, except that it was she who must bring up the three children. To the girls, she was neither a lazy nor a neglectful mother. She guarded Sarah's health and Fanny's manners. As for Julian, whatever capacity for love she possessed went into her feeling for him. It might have been that she was accustomed to functioning wholly through her brain, so that when it came to Julian she was lost. She was a little lost with the girls. Three human beings that she had in her charge, and she didn't really know what to do about any of them. Perhaps it never occurred to her that there was anything to do beyond what she did. And Martin was too busy. Even his spare thought was otherwise taken. And it wouldn't have used so much thought, just to have noticed. Julian he couldn't help noticing sometimes, but he didn't want to notice Julian—he wanted to forget him. He had no conscious wish to forget his girls, but he saw them so little—less of them than he did of his servants. His girls, like the smaller checks, were Frances's lookout. And Frances was clever enough with people generally—with strangers or casual friends—and with people important to Martin she had distinct gifts as a diplomat. After all, Frances was still a very beautiful woman. She had a style and a distinction which more than replaced the more heart-breaking charms of her girlhood. No matter how high a man might go, she would be there gracing the eminence.

Meanwhile the work of the world, and of Martin, went on. Black Tom Pier in Bayonne, New Jersey, blew up. It was the chief loading point for munitions. The explosives had undoubtedly been handled carelessly. At the time no other cause was proved, and German agents were exonerated. Certain findings about the disaster, which had come to light in

more recent years, appeared more dubious. Martin himself had always been dubious. The hour was too well chosen—two o'clock in the morning—the damage was confined to property. No insurance, of course, and the financial loss was very heavy. Some day Martin's heirs might receive settlement for his part of the claims. A favorable decision in that regard had very recently been arrived at. But at that time the only result was that the shrapnel bursting in the sky had been defeated of their purpose. No killing at all. Martin knew—none better—that there were many people who would be glad, Axel among them. Let him have his gladness. Martin doubted if it would be anything more than that, and that he, or his peace group, had had anything to do with the disaster.

There was talk of war's end, but no end came. The Germans were building more submarines, and it looked as though the submarine warfare, which had been throttled for a time, would break out again in earnest. There was a strong party here, headed by Theodore Roosevelt, who wanted this country to join the Allies, and a party in Germany who wanted to declare war on the United States. President Wilson seemed a little bogged beneath the weight of his own state papers. He was being much advised by a certain Colonel House, who gained quite a reputation as a mediator and enjoyed himself immensely in close communion with the great of all nations. Wilson was re-elected by a narrow margin. He had kept us out of war. Well, perhaps he had. Martin wouldn't know—he wasn't so close to politics as he had been once. He had known McKinley, he had talked with Taft many times, Roosevelt was his friend. Wilson he had seen—he had even shaken his hand—that was all. This was partly circumstance and partly the type of men they both were—two entirely different types, having nothing in common but a will to power; and this they expressed in such different ways.

Martin wanted to be fair to the president. There were

many who thought him a great man, one of the greatest, and that his place in history would grow starrier with time. Martin was never great in the sense that such people meant, and by which they would measure greatness. And the motives which actuated the other man were motives which, for the most part, Martin never understood. This may have been why he doubted their vaunted purity. Martin was essentially a man of action. He made his decisions and he carried them through. It always seemed to him that Wilson vacillated. He couldn't make up his mind—the mind which people placed on a pedestal, and watched as they might watch through a telescope the spots on the sun, and yet failed to penetrate, in spite of the flow of words. Why the failure? Wilson was obstinate and self-centered and ambitious, and vacillating at the same time. It was a rare combination of qualities. And he found himself caught in a net at last, slippery as he was, and the net was the United States going into the war.

What else but these things could a man like Martin think about a man like Wilson? Though it wouldn't matter, in the long run, what Martin thought. It mattered a good deal what Wilson thought. In fact, what Wilson thought, and didn't think, and changed his mind about, might have influenced considerably the making of past and present, and even future, history.

The two forces which really stood out during these years were money and death. Financiers handled the money, steel men and military strategists the death. The rest was talk, and the talk didn't seem to get anywhere. Martin realized now, with the weight of years behind him, there were sides to the situation which he had never attempted to examine. They had existed in a sort of half light, making examination difficult. Things didn't happen without reason—without cause—and, somewhere, there must have been both reason and cause. The war was a conflagration which started in a comparatively small way and spread. There was plenty of

fuel for the spreading, and there were men who must have known where it was kept. These men must have had many things in view, and it was doubtful whether any of them got what they wanted. And the end was not yet. Those shrapnel exploding so innocently in the sky were still exploding. Louder now, much louder. Some of the shells had lain fallow in a far field for more than twenty years, and heat, or movement, had at last worked through to them.

Italy entered the war late, though not as late as the United States. This historical event was of great importance to the family of Lyndendaal. At the first battle of the Isonzo, under General Cadorna, the Count Ignazio Mattiabelli was badly wounded. He recovered—worse luck—but not sufficiently to be of use for fighting. He had been in this country during the earlier days of the war, on a mission for his government. Sarah had known him then, it seemed, though Martin hadn't. After his wounds were healed he returned here in some more valuable diplomatic capacity. He was a wounded hero and rather a handsome one, though there was always something peculiar about the way in which his ears were set into his head. But how was Martin to know that Sarah was thinking of marrying him? And, when the matter was finally brought to Martin's attention, there was very little he could do about it. After all, Sarah wasn't a child. She was twenty-three years old. High time she married someone, Frances said. And the count wasn't a criminal fleeing justice, or a moron or a confirmed drunkard. He held an honorable post and came of an honorable descent. The title was genuine. Martin found that out. And Martin thought highly of titles.

Sarah married him, with much ceremony, at Newport. Martin remembered becoming increasingly aware that he didn't like him, but there was so much else for Martin to think about, and if there had been very little he could have done before, there was nothing now. He didn't recall that his opinion of the count had been asked—merely his sure

presence at the wedding, and the signing of a check. If he were the captain of a ship, his hand wasn't even at the helm any more. The ship was a hulk foundering in strange seas, while he sat in his cabin trying to chart the course of other ships, not his own.

25

For Martin, Sarah's wedding was the one social occasion of the summer. It well could be, on the scale it was. To perfection was added magnificence. Frances had outdone herself. Even Helen Lake's marriage to Lord Ammidon had not topped it. There was some criticism of the grandeur in that section of the press which prided itself on the possession of a conscience. "Men dying in the mud and munition makers reveling—" To hear them rave you would have thought that diamonds as big as hen's eggs had been used for doorstops.

Mrs. Calverton, Frances's mother, was getting to be an old woman. Her son Gordon's being married—she never cared greatly for his wife—and her son Jack's living in a place she had no wish to live in, she had taken up her abode with the Lyndendaals. Martin had always liked her, and she him. The two had never been closer than on this day, because they were the only known two present who didn't like Ignazio Mattiabelli. Everyone else thought him charming. Mrs. Calverton's lameness had grown with the years. Mattiabelli was a little lame from his wounds. Perhaps their common disability made her uncomfortable.

She and Martin were alone together for a few moments. Just after the wedding breakfast, it was, and she was sitting at the big horseshoe the table formed, waiting till it was empty of guests, so that her servant could help her to her feet without being conspicuous about it. Martin had lingered also.

"Why did you let her do it?" she asked him.

"Who and what?"

"Let Sarah marry him?"

"How could I have stopped her?"

"Very simply! Refused a settlement!"

"That would have made a nasty row, and there's really nothing against the man."

"Just something in his face—that's all."

"Frances thinks he's perfect."

"Why didn't she marry him herself, then? She'd make a lovely countess, don't you think?" It was rather a startling joke, but what she went on to say, sharply whispering in Martin's ear, had nothing of joke about it: "You know if Frances left you, you'd go on living—and well, too—you know you would."

Martin laughed. He had no other answer ready. He was surprised at a mother's saying such a thing about her daughter. All the Calvertons had in them the capacity for surprising him. Such beautiful manners, they all had, and they were apt to be so careful what they said, but when they really spoke it was with the complete speech of the silent. Mrs. Calverton, the ideal mother-in-law, who never criticized nor intruded, and lived in Martin's house, as self-effacing as a turtle in a wood . . . She went on—Martin was a little afraid of her going on, but he might have saved his fear. What she went on with was harmless:

"Too bad my sister Clementine couldn't have come to the wedding. But she wouldn't risk the crossing, what with submarines and all. Besides, she's getting old like the rest of us, and she's busy with her hospital. But she should have tried to get here, considering that it was she who gave Mattiabelli his letter of introduction to us in the first place. I shall remember that of Clementine."

"I'm sure you will. I didn't know that we have her to thank."

"You never know anything—not that I blame you."

"If he only wasn't a foreigner!"

"Well, well, this from you! I remember Mr. Calverton didn't like foreigners either."

"Yes, that Christmas day I came to your house—" Martin recalled suddenly that the day to which he referred so casually was the day this woman's husband had died—and some people thought he had died because of Martin. He was aware of setting himself for a hurdle—a rather dangerous hurdle—and landing on safer ground. "Mattiabelli's as much a foreigner to me as to you."

"More so, I should fancy."

It was a prejudice of Martin's which clung to him even now, to feel that South Europeans and Orientals, and all peoples not strictly Nordic in origin, were not quite on a par with the good blond racial strains. It was a highly controversial subject—and legitimately open to controversy certainly. He had been told that there was really no such thing as a strictly Nordic origin, the races of the world having been subject to migrations and conquests from time immemorial. But he couldn't help how he felt, and it wasn't the reason he didn't like Mattiabelli. If the man hadn't been a Latin—and therefore excusable—he'd have liked him less. People such as that couldn't be held responsible for what they were. It was why, at the present time, Martin was utterly out of sympathy with Hitler's persecution of the Jews. If the Germans really believed the Jews inferior they should have been kind—segregated them, perhaps, or suggested removal in certain cases, but not brought down on them the vials of their wrath. The thing was that they didn't believe them inferior. They were afraid of them. The great race must be getting soft, must be on the downward grade. It made Martin feel glad that the present problems were not his own.

But back in this summer of 1916 things were different. The day Sarah was made a countess dawned bright, and

later a fog blew in from the sea. Martin remembered that some of the crisper gowns of the ladies took to hanging a little limp. The violins in the orchestra had trouble with their strings. Stiff collars wilted and black coats were warm. But there was a chill in the fog, too. Though you didn't feel that unless you went out on the lawn where a marquee was set up with a floor for dancing. Sarah herself looked as cool as a cucumber in satin as white and as gleaming as ice, and a lace veil which had belonged to Mrs. Calverton's mother. It was the first intimation that anyone had had that Sarah came very close to being a beautiful woman. It might be that it would take a man like Mattiabelli to make Sarah beautiful—a point in his favor, certainly, in spite of what Martin and Sarah's grandmother thought of him.

It heartened Martin, what Mrs. Calverton thought. She was like a wisp from the fog, a fairy godmother. Her stout cane with its rubber tip was a wand she might wave. Martin, leaning over her at the deserted table, had the fancy to pick her up in his strong arms and bear her in triumph among the guests. But people would have thought him drunk if he'd done that and, in spite of the flow of vintage wines, Martin had never been soberer. He was a man attuned to power, and that day, in the midst of the grandeur which he had made possible, he realized his power had its limitations. Now, sitting here helplessly, he saw his own failures as it were in the round, and could discount the sight of them. Then, admitting or seeing them so rarely, the sight was more devastating. He scorned panic—perhaps unduly. If he hadn't scorned it, it would have been very easy for panic to have assailed him. And that would have accomplished exactly nothing.

He had been as careless of his own child as though he had locked her up in a house and turned away while someone set a match to it. Suddenly he knew this of himself, and saw himself in the turning. But you couldn't unwind a clock. Clocks ticked on, even the clocks of giants. Any man—giant

or no—could smash a clock so that it wouldn't run, but that merely proved it a machine geared to record time, and the time it recorded would remain unaffected.

Martin's children were hardly a credit to him. Sarah, marrying as she was, Julian who—unlike Martin—had often been soberer. Difficult as Julian had found it to enter college, this was nothing to the difficulties presented in remaining there. But he had refused to take his first expulsion as anything but funny. Fanny was a pleasant pretty girl, her history as yet uneventful. And then there was Martin's wife, looking far too young to be mother of all this brood, and having such a serene and leisured air. If Martin had a fancy that Mrs. Calverton's cane was a fairy wand, the wand must have been loaned to Frances to bring this occasion into being. Whatever it may have been for anyone else, the day was a triumph for Frances. Martin didn't begrudge her the triumph. She was a wonderful woman, that was what everyone said of her. If Martin had never seen her before this day, he might have fallen in love with her, she was so perfect. She was an ivory figure, and the figure could move and speak and had a brain. There was no guest for whom she had not the right greeting and the right farewell.

She even had the right one for Martin himself, putting her hand on his arm just in passing, and saying, "Well, Martin, do you like it?"

That wasn't a question to be answered, yes, or, no, and she must have been aware it was not. What she meant to convey was that he was the lord and master of all he surveyed, and did her humble efforts please him? No good then to try to explain how he felt. There wasn't time. There never was time. They had drifted away from each other, and away.

"I hope," said Martin, "that Sarah will be happy."

"In Washington, in the Embassy, how can she help it?"

Sarah and her count were going to live in Washington for a while, after a brief honeymoon in the Adirondacks. The

count's yellow racing car waited in the back driveway, to take them on their journey. Martin wanted to speak to Sarah, but upstairs where she was changing her things there would be friends and maids. He might have had them get out, but time passed and he didn't do so—just the conventional fatherly embrace and good wishes—that was all. There were important men present, and an important conference in the library on world-shaking matters. The next day, back in New York, Martin felt as though all virtue had gone out of him.

If Martin had had little leisure to give to his family before, he had less through the rest of this summer, and the fall, and on into the winter when war—our war—came closer. He was strong, thank Heaven. He could be battered and shaken and battered again, and yet there was always a margin of safety. He and Eric often talked of this winter before we went into the war, two old men remembering the days of their might.

"Remember, Eric, how I would telephone you to bring my bag to the station?"

"Indeed I do, sir. It would be the middle of the night sometimes. I always had a bag in readiness. And do you remember the room you took in that hotel near the Jamaica plant, so I could come over there and give you a rubdown? You said it was as good as sleep or rest, and quicker."

Martin had a staff of assistants, boiled down to men who were competent in their jobs and would work at them without stint. He had competitors and allies and agreements and disagreements, but in the last analysis it came to the one thing—the accomplishment of work in a given time that never could quite be accomplished in such time. It entailed a constant stretching of the twenty-four-hour span. And there were always people waiting to see him, clamoring to use up the minutes and the hours. No one saw him without appointment—no outsider—but as he never knew himself where he

would be at any given moment, appointments were difficult to count on.

In his New York office, his secretary, Miss Bellows, had a sort of second sense about such things. She seemed to know, instinctively, what was important to Martin and what wasn't, and no plea or threat or argument could move her from her knowledge. It was said of her that if the King of England came to call, he would have to state his case at her desk before being admitted to the inner sanctum—and state a good case, too. But if any emergency arose, and Martin must be reached, Miss Bellows would be the one to reach him. She had a way of guessing where he was—at least others called it guessing. If he was coming in, she knew it, and if he wasn't coming, she knew that, even though everyone who should have known more than she did, might be expecting him. To his private office there were but two keys, her own and Martin's, and in his absence no one but herself entered the place. Cleaning women were admitted only under her supervision. It was a room supposed to hold secrets, but what it held—more than secrets—was a certain measure of privacy. Whatever turmoil might be at the moment in progress, Martin could think of that privacy awaiting his pleasure. To think of it was next best to attaining it.

The room was large—almost as large as this library of Martin's. But there the resemblance ended. There was a very large desk, and a chair for Martin and two other chairs, a file and a table. Nothing else except a carpet of the type he liked, so richly designed with leaves and flowers that the pattern formed a sort of thicket. At the end of the room the desk faced, the two windows held a view uninterrupted for many miles. Martin's offices were on the fiftieth story of the building which was, at that time, the second tallest man-made structure in the world. He had moved there the year before the war. He had never moved since. He would like to see the place again before he died, but he doubted if he

would. Martha went there daily. That fine room with the view was used by her now, and she assured Martin that nothing had been changed.

"It was right in that room," he told her, "that I talked to your father about you. And I gave him a check for two thousand dollars. His taking it showed me, more than anything else ever has, how much one person can love another!"

Martin had been asking Miss Bellows questions and she had been answering them. There were a lot of questions, as he'd been away, but her answers were as ready as though she'd known in advance what he would ask and had a list of the needed data before her.

"All right," he said at last, "now for the letters—and type 'em yourself—they're private."

The admonition was unnecessary, and Martin knew it, because Miss Bellows was perfectly competent to judge whether letters were private or not. She would have to dress them up a little, anyway, Martin's epistolary style leaving something to be desired. They were in the midst of dictation when one of the telephones on the desk rang. Miss Bellows picked it up. No one was supposed to get through to Martin, and this wasn't the private wire. In fact, no one, outside of the office, knew he was here.

"Mr. Lyndendaal can't speak with anyone," she said, "I'll take the message when I'm free."

"Take it now," Martin was moved to command.

Miss Bellows listened a moment and then turned to him—"It's your cousin, a Mr. Christiansen—he's waiting in the reception room."

"Tell Mr. Christiansen I'll see him in a few minutes."

A faint surprise flickered over Miss Bellows' face as she relayed the information. They went on with the letters, but Martin's mind wasn't on them now. What brought Axel here?

"That's all. I'll see Mr. Christiansen."

you're due at the Dover proving arsenal at twelve. It's nearly eleven now. With luck, it's an hour's run."

"Can't Colby go?"

"Mr. Colby's out there now. He has some new dies for his bullet points which he thinks won't crack. He wants you to see them."

"How'd he get them?"

"Made them. I met him at the public library obtaining the information."

Martin laughed. "That's a hell of a place to obtain information about dies!" Colby was an engineer, and a steel man, and probably knew more about the making of dies than any man in this country. Miss Bellows had succeeded in arousing Martin's curiosity. "All right—I'll go—I may be a bit late. Get Colby on the wire and tell him so."

Miss Bellows departed, hugging her partial triumph, and Axel Christiansen walked in. Since Martin had seen him at the hospital, Axel had grown into an old man. He walked uncertainly, his tall frame stooped. He was so thin it was as if his clothes alone held his bones together. Martin noticed his clothes. They were shabby, but clean and well pressed, and worn—in spite of the stoop—with a certain careless swagger. Axel still was very presentable. Martin rose. He didn't rise to many people who entered that room.

"Well, well, Axel, it's good to see you—sit down—"

"It's good to see you, Martin." Axel arranged himself in the chair lately occupied by Miss Bellows. He laid his hat upon the desk. His hair, once blond, was now quite white. His eyes were sunk deep in their sockets, but they were as blue as ever they had been.

"How are you?" Martin asked.

"Not so good. And you?"

"I have little time to wonder how I am!"

"I know that," said Axel, "and I shan't take much of your time."

"I did not mean it so. Still doing the same work?"

"A little. I'm afraid it is useless work—almost as useless as I myself have come to be."

"You mustn't speak so of yourself, Axel—"

"Possibly not. When they cut the cancer out of me, the doctors told me—in strict confidence—I had less than a year to live. Nearly two years have passed since then—or it will be two, next summer—so I'm still ahead!" A smile came—a mere skin of a smile.

"They should never have told you such a thing—they didn't to me, and I made inquiries about you—but what matter, as it's been proved not so? You shouldn't try to work at all—a complete rest—a change of scene—"

"I didn't come here," said Axel, "to talk about myself." He paused, seeming to gather what strength remained to him. "I suppose you're waiting to find out what I have come for."

"Why for anything except a friendly chat? You were lucky to find me here."

"I thought I might find you. When one is ill, one gets a feeling about such matters." He paused again. Martin waited. The proving arsenal could wait, too, and Colby's dies. Presently Axel went on: "You remember, Martin, my telling you that if I ever came to you for help it would not be for myself, but because I could no longer do for those I love what I should do?"

"I remember. That was the evening I saw you in the hospital, and you told me about your girl."

"So it was. Martha will be sixteen in May."

"It seems like yesterday," said Martin, "the day she was born, and we drank her health!"

"It's about Martha that I have come. She must have her last few months of school, and I am at the end of my resources. I have never been beholden to you before, Martin."

"You don't have to remind me. And I could have done so much for you if you hadn't been so squeamish." Martin was

already reaching in an inner pocket and bringing out a small check book. "My private account—just for the things I like to do—"

"Martha is not in the least squeamish," Axel went on. "She has all of what you would be pleased to call my good qualities. But she has, in addition, your good qualities. She is a very remarkable girl."

"She must be," said Martin, "she must be indeed! Just what sum did you have in view?"

"Would five hundred dollars be too much?"

"No, I hardly think that would be too much." Martin was writing in his check book. He finished, blotted the check carefully on the bright clean blotter which lay to his hand, and thrust the precious paper across to his cousin. "There you are—"

The check was drawn payable to Martha Christiansen. It was for four times the sum asked.

"Why—I said five hundred—"

"If your girl, Martha, is so very remarkable, she would not have said five hundred."

Axel fingered the check. He smoothed it with his long delicate thumb—the thumb which bent back so extraordinarily far—he seemed to test its edge as one might test the sharpness of a knifeblade. And then he turned his sudden gaze upon Martin. "Perhaps she wouldn't," was all he said, before putting the check away in a shabby and empty bill fold.

"I'm giving it to the girl instead of to you," said Martin, "because, from what you say of her, I fancy she'll know better than you what to do with it."

"It's just as well, because my wife is very angry at my coming here at all, and if I brought back such a check there would be no peace till I returned it. But, as you've drawn it to Martha instead of to me, that makes a difference."

"For Martha, Anna will not mind?"

"She'll mind very much! But there'll be nothing she can do."

That was very interesting. He had known Anna only slightly, but Martin never recalled her as a woman who would be helpless in the face of a child's will. "Anna hates me, doesn't she? She would have you all starve, rather than take my money."

"We shouldn't quite starve," said Axel. "We have a few dollars still in the savings bank. And Anna makes cakes and sells them—a few dollars a week, that brings in. Martha could leave school if she had to—she's a big girl. She could get work. If all this seems better to Anna than coming to you, you mustn't blame her too much. She used to work in the fields when she was younger than Martha is."

"What is Martha going to do when she's through with school?" Martin asked. "Take a job with Emanuel Safford?"

"How did you know that?"

Martin explained how he knew.

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Safford has promised her a job, but—" Axel hesitated. "Well, if you must know, she doesn't want to take it. She says there's no chance for a woman to get ahead in an office of that particular sort."

"You mean, building elevators is not a good field for women?"

"Something like that."

"The same objection might apply if I took her here. But I pay more than Safford does. She may feel under a certain obligation with Safford. Well, now she may feel the same with me. She can take her choice."

"You want her here?"

"Naturally—a bright girl—"

"She's not pretty," said Axel.

"Somehow, I didn't think she was." It was a point unemphasized, but Martin was a little mad that it had to be made at all. And then—"I'm so damned tired of pretty girls!"

"You must be getting old," said Axel. Both men laughed. Axel had a hearty laugh for a sick man.

"They're good only for one thing," said Martin, "and not much of that."

"You should know. You've had your share."

"That might be the reason I'm so tired of them. But I never am tired of youth. I want to see youth get ahead in the world."

"Your own children?"

"Bah—what have they to get ahead to?" Why was Axel always bringing up the subject of Martin's own children? Just to crow over him? "Perhaps Anna would not care to have her daughter come to me to work. Or would that, again, be something about which she could do nothing?" It was a point on which Martin found himself extremely curious.

"You'll have to ask Anna that question."

"I shall, when the occasion arises."

Axel rose. Martin noticed how weak he was in getting to his feet. "I must go. No use to thank you."

"Where do you live?"

"In Brooklyn."

That was no answer. Martin knew he lived in Brooklyn, and that a number of years before he had moved from the place where Martin once had been to see him. He knew, also, that the man was in no condition to go home by subway and trolley. He rang, and Miss Bellows came in.

"Is my car waiting?" Martin asked her.

"Yes, Mr. Lyndendaal."

"I suppose I'll need it myself."

"I'm afraid so."

"Well, get another car—"

"A taxi?"

"No, I want a nice easy riding car. It's for Mr. Christiansen—he isn't feeling very well—" Martin turned—"Now, Axel, you just wait a few minutes. I can't wait with you—I'm late,

as it is—I—" Martin became aware that he was talking to thin air. Axel had gone—slipped away under cover of this brief interchange. He had always been like that, capable of appearing or disappearing without sound or warning. Martin remembered the first time he'd ever seen him. There was no one in the farm kitchen except himself, and suddenly Axel was standing in the doorway. What did he do? Clap his hands and come, and clap his hands and vanish?

"Mr. Christiansen evidently didn't want a car," Miss Bellows commented. It was lucky that Miss Bellows accepted his presence.

Because, if it had not been for that, and that Martin could verify the drawing of a check, Axel's visit might never have happened. Martin shook himself, as from a trance.

"Now for Colby's dies," he said. Miss Bellows followed him with his hat and coat. Otherwise he might have forgotten them, and spring wasn't here yet. There was something else he was near to forgetting. "Oh, by the way—there's a girl coming to work here—some time in June, it will be. You'll make a place for her."

"What is she to do?"

"How should I know?"

Miss Bellows was obviously discomfited. Martin wasn't. He might be indirectly responsible for the death of thousands, but he felt like the little brother of all the world. He was smiling to himself all the way down in the express elevator.

There wasn't very much to smile about during the days that followed. And rather less for Martin than for anyone else, save for the money he kept making. Money and death. Death wasn't in the trenches, only. Fleetwood died. He'd

been ailing for a long time, but no one had thought the winter would finish him. He was Martin's closest friend. Tom, Emily's husband, never took his place. Tom was clever enough, but he was without the ordinary human frailties. The Fleetwood office was never the same to Martin after the old man died. Legal advice came out of it like food from an automatic restaurant. It was sound, but it had no flavor. There was no comfort in it—just fact. It was hard enough to lose a friend, without losing a lawyer at the same time. Then, to make things yet more difficult, there were Sarah's troubles. Her husband evidently possessed all the vices, including brutality. Martin, hearing rumors, took time he ill could spare and went to Washington.

There was nothing you could put your finger on, but something about Sarah's house reminded Martin of how a bathroom would be, freshly scrubbed, after the washings of a murder. Sarah was sticking it out, refusing to say anything, but she smiled only when she knew you were looking at her. Frances took the rather logical view that they could do little, until they knew what was to be done.

"I don't believe in divorce, Martin. You should know that."

Frances couldn't have meant to place herself and Sarah in the same boat, but that was how it sounded. It made Martin feel even more responsible for Sarah's plight than he had felt before. Then Sarah had a miscarriage, and was quite ill about it. Frances went to Washington and came back with the report that Mattiabelli had been much upset by his wife's illness and was now a reformed character. But Frances always took of her son-in-law the best view possible. He was reported by her to have actually got down on his knees to Sarah and begged forgiveness.

"For what?" Martin asked.

Martin didn't like it—he didn't like it at all—but there was the steel business for him to attend to. Not much doubt

existed that this country was going into the war, and any troubles Sarah had would have to wait. He could thank the war that Sarah wasn't in some damp stone castle in Italy, like a princess in a tower. But if it hadn't been for the war in the first place, she might never have met the man.

On April second, Wilson came before Congress and asked for a declaration. The world must be made safe for democracy. It was the greatest of his great phrases. It was designed to spur people on to greater effort. But there was no phrase which could have made Martin work any harder than he was working already. He didn't even have time to wonder why he did it. It wasn't for money—not primarily. It wasn't for being imbued with any great and noble fervor to help a great and noble cause. It may have held—and he'd thought all this out since—a degree of egotistic satisfaction. His work was of world importance, consequently he himself was of world importance. And that was something you couldn't turn your back upon.

Respite was for weaklings. Quiet, for its own sake, would seem strange and vacuous, and must be put at once to the uses and concentrations of the moment. For Martin, there was so rarely quiet. He could hear in his sleep the roar of his mills—louder in sleep than in waking, the actuality being so familiar. He had the fancy, too, that if he listened close he could detect that ultimate sound, for which these lesser hummings were but a means. The roar of battle was surely not familiar to him, nor the high screech of pain. But he heard it all—or thought he did—the whole scale of turmoil, from the mightiest detonation to the machine-rattle which was like pebbles down a chute, it was so fast. Not fast as some things are counted, but even the earliest of the Maxim guns could fire six hundred and sixty-six shots a minute.

Martin had half a century of living behind him then. He looked it, his mirror told him. And in spite of work, and in spite of the ministrations of Eric, he carried too much flesh.

But beneath the flesh the play of muscles could still be discerned, and he could lift a weight equally with any laborer. There was no paunch, and his shoulders were as straight as ever they had been. Some day, when time was freer, he thought he would take up boxing. The prize ring had always been his favorite arena. The stokehole's being in the past, he had no legitimate chance to test the power of his fist. For that, there must be quickness as well as strength—quickness of the brain. It seemed to Martin that his brain had attained a certain quickness in this middle period which it had lacked in youth. In years he was on the downward slope, but he refused to admit himself the decline. Fatigue was something he never felt—not any more.

Now, in his last illness, he was told by his doctors that the illness had existed then, and that his tremendous influx of energy was a false energy which should have warned him. It had been an abnormal condition. According to doctors, most conditions were. They claimed that a capacity for work, such as Martin had possessed, depended on peculiarities of the glandular system. It was a disease, a form of vice if you like, like gambling or women or liquor or drugs, or all of these combined. But if you wanted to succeed, Martin still thought, it was the one outstanding virtue to be treasured above all else.

There were three tests by which the age of man might be determined—brain, brawn and loving. For Martin, there was no loving. Three tests—and there had been a time when he had feared the failure of the third denoted age. No longer was this true. No, it wasn't age any more, but the sheer tightening of all his energies in the one direction. Women didn't concern him at all, and, as the lack of concern had ample reason, it didn't matter. You couldn't have everything. In that sense, then, Martin was hardly aware that women existed. They didn't—not as women, that is to say. He had an occasional word with Frances or Fanny, and there

was his worry about Sarah, and there was Miss Bellows. She was an odd little creature. It was at this time that Martin wanted to raise her salary—fifty dollars a week was totally inadequate pay for the work she was doing—and she refused the raise.

Martin was quite mad about it. "Why not, for God's sake?"

"I don't care to make a profit out of the war."

"Don't tell me you're a pacifist!"

"If I were, I wouldn't be here."

The two were in Martin's private office. Martin was so mad that the lunatic fancy took him, how easy it would be to pick his precious secretary up and toss her out of the window, which was fifty stories above the street. It would be a beautiful gesture, and relieve his mind. Her quiet matter-of-fact voice cut in on his musing:

"There are some letters, Mr. Lyndendaal, I think you better look at."

Her judgment in such matters was infallible. There were, in all, a dozen letters to form the task she set him. He had dimly the remembrance of going through them and passing them back to her with suggestions for answers, or what not. He rarely dictated answers any more—just a suggestion was what she must have. The last letter in the pile had an enclosure, a small oblong of blue paper. He slipped it out of the clip with which it was neatly fastened to the letter-head.

"What, in time, is this?"

"It's a money order, Mr. Lyndendaal."

"For what?"

"For twenty dollars."

There it was—for twenty dollars. It had been years since Martin had seen a money order. He didn't understand it—not at least until he had read the letter, which was really very simple:

805 Greene Avenue
Brooklyn, N. Y.
June 1, 1917

Mr. Martin Lyndendaal
233 Broadway
New York City

Dear Sir:

This is June 1st. I have had the use of your money, two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00), for three months. Enclosed, please find an order for twenty dollars (\$20.00), which is quarterly interest at 4% on same. I hope that this is satisfactory to you.

Taking this opportunity to thank you for your kindness, I remain,

Very truly yours,
Martha Christiansen
(Martha Christiansen)

Martin read this document through several times. Then he handed its enclosure to his waiting minion: "Miss Bellows, take this to the post office and get it cashed. Make them give you a twenty dollar bill. Attend to it personally, and as soon as you can."

He signed the thing, at her instigation. She left on her appointed mission and the business of the place went on. There were people waiting to see Martin and he saw them. As soon as Miss Bellows returned, he brought his interviews to a close.

"Here's your money," she said. "What are you going to do with it—frame it?"

"How did you guess? I want a narrow gold frame—solid gold. And a mat showing about an inch margin all around. Take it to Tiffany's and tell them to rush the job. I wish to hang it on the wall by the desk here."

Miss Bellows' face took on the impassivity with which she always met Martin's more flagrant eccentricities. "You want

me to take it personally? Miss Bevans could go—she could go at her lunch hour.”

“What’s the matter with your lunch hour?”

“Nothing.”

Miss Bellows was in the habit of having her lunch sent up from the drugstore downstairs, and Martin knew it.

“Miss Bevans is a smart girl, but I wouldn’t trust her.”

“You wouldn’t trust her with twenty dollars?”

“Not with this twenty dollars. You should be flattered that I trust you. By the way, that’s the girl I told you about, who’s coming to work here.” Martin gave her the letter to look at again. She perused it with a critical eye. “Nothing wrong with the typing, is there?”

“Nothing. The spacing could be better.”

“Kindly remember that the young lady hasn’t yet had the benefit of your advice.”

“One must make allowances,” Miss Bellows answered, thrusting the bill very carefully into a long white envelope.

Martin watched her to see she didn’t fold it. “You see,” he went on—he felt the need of talk, and he didn’t want his secretary to get any wrong ideas about the situation, either—“this is the first money that anyone ever gave me when they didn’t have to.”

“It will probably pay dividends.”

“Undoubtedly,” said Martin.

The first dividend it paid was a call from Martin. And the address on Martha’s letter wasn’t convenient to any place where he was apt to be. With time at the premium it was for him, that call was almost fabulous. But he wasn’t thinking of that when his chauffeur finally landed him there, and he entered the shabby vestibule. There were letter boxes with bells beneath them, and a row of names difficult to read in the bad light. He deciphered, CHRISTIANSEN.

Martin rang and nothing happened. He rang again and presently the door clicked. Someone was at home. He won-

dered if it would be Anna, and if she would let him in. He pressed on the door while it still was clicking. It opened under the pressure and allowed him to enter a narrow hallway with concrete stairs at the rear. Nothing to do but climb them. He climbed three flights. Many was the steel skeleton he'd climbed, with nothing but emptiness beneath him. Three flights of solid stairway was nothing. At the end of that a door had been thrown wide and a man stood there wearing a woolen bathrobe. The garment was far too big for him and was wrapped around his emaciated frame almost double. It was a moment more before Martin saw who the man was.

"Well, Axel—"

"Why, Martin—come in—"

"Many thanks."

"Straight down to the end—I follow you slowly."

The room to which Martin was directed had evidently been designed for the parlor. It was being used for a bedroom, and wasn't really so very small, though it seemed to Martin like a room in a doll's house. That was the trouble with being big—one so easily grew demanding of space.

"You don't mind," said Axel, "if I return to my bed?" He divested himself of the robe. Every time Martin saw him he was thinner than the time before. Soon there would be nothing left of him. "Sit down, Martin, find a chair, put down your hat. It is good to see you."

"It is good to see you, too, but I'm sorry to see you like this." Martin drew the chair close to the bedside. "Can nothing be done?"

"What could be done would not be worth doing. Don't let's talk of it." Axel took a handkerchief from beneath his pillow and wiped away the little beads of sweat that had formed on his face. It had been an exertion, answering the door. Martin noticed that his skin was yellowish and hard like the parchment cover of an old book, only moist instead

of dry. He sank back a little among the pillows. "Patching up a wreck is such weary business."

"Are you alone here?" He ought not to be alone—not for a moment.

"Anna is out, doing some errands."

"And your girl?"

"She came home from school, but she left again. She had to take some books back to the library." From his not too convenient angle, Axel tried to reach for a cigarette. Martin took one from the box which lay open on a little stand. He lit a match for him, held it and then blew out the flame. Axel drew the smoke deep into his nostrils, as if it were the one physical pleasure which remained to him.

"I'd like to see your girl," Martin said. "Did you know she wrote me a letter?"

"Martha wrote you a letter?" Axel very definitely did not know. He must be very ill indeed not to know such things.

Martin should have insisted, long ago, that matters be put into his own hands. Now it was probably too late. Axel said not to talk about what could be done. No, there would be little use in talk. The thing to do was to get him to the hospital as soon as possible, and some first class doctors on the job. All the surgeons were going overseas as fast as they could get fitted to uniforms, but there must be some of them left behind. Cancer, Axel had said it was. Well, they would soon find out.

"Have you seen a doctor?" Martin asked.

"Yes."

"I suppose it would be too much to ask what he said?"

"Much too much."

Little use in talking, but Martin insisted on talking: "You see, Axel, to me you are very important—you always have been—and I cannot let anything—"

His cousin cut him off. "I assure you, I am profoundly unimportant—hardly worth crossing the street about."

"You mustn't speak so! If you would go back to the hospital and have some really first class medical men—not just run of the mill."

"I've heard all that! I cannot bring peace to the world, but at least I can have it for myself, may I not?"

Martin picked up a bottle from the bedside stand. It was a little bottle and contained little white pills. The label was clear, even to one without knowledge of such things. "Are these peace?" he asked. "Do you take them when the pain is too great?"

"Yes. But pain is not so difficult to endure—even great pain. Sometimes it has the virtue of setting one free."

"What do you mean?" Was he talking about dying?

"I mean, it can separate the functions of the mind from the functions of the body. But you wouldn't know that."

There were so many things Martin wouldn't know, compared to those Axel knew. There always had been. They better talk of other matters for a time. Martin brought up again the one of Martha's letter.

"Oh, yes," said Axel, "I should like to hear more about it."

Martin's hand was not designed for minute explorations, but he managed to delve into an inner pocket and to bring forth an envelope which he now held out. "Here it is—"

Axel made a motion of negation. "Read it to me yourself."

The envelope was slit at one end and Martin drew out the folded contents. He read it through, then placed it very carefully back in his pocket. "Did you tell her the money was a loan?" he asked.

"No, she told that to me."

"Brief," said Martin. "No flourishes. The stale phrases of business take new life. She writes, as it were, to an enemy, but she gives that enemy his due. Do you know what I am doing with her twenty dollars?"

"It is yours to do with as you please."

"I thought to return it to her, and then at once I decided against such a course."

Axel shook his head—"No—"

"I'm having it framed in a gold frame, and I'm going to hang it by my desk. I wish all money were as precious. She typewrites very nicely. There is always room in my office for a bright girl who can typewrite."

"I know—you said you wanted her." Axel slid down further in his bed. It was as if this visit had shocked him out of what Martin suspected was his usual apathy, which was now creeping over him again. In his condition, his capacity for any real alertness must be pathetically short-lived. "Martha is very clever," he said, "far cleverer than I, and you always wanted me to work for you in some capacity or other."

"You've had in you the possibilities of great things, Axel."

"Never fulfilled." Some train of thought followed of which the sick man didn't speak, and then—"I've done what I could. Sometimes it's been more than I could." Martin had to bend close to hear. The cigarette Axel had been smoking fell from his hand onto the bed coverings. Martin rescued it before damage was done. "Less than a year, the doctors gave me—"

"Nonsense, Axel, they said nothing of that to me. In fact, the hospital reported that you had made an exceptionally quick and satisfactory recovery!"

"I know—I'm hard to kill—too hard, perhaps." It was almost a whisper. The hardness affected him, evidently, with an infinite weariness. And then, unexpectedly—"There is always God."

"Do you really believe in God?"

"Why not? Not as an old man with a long white beard. Not as a definite and beneficent entity of any sort. But as a power—yes." Axel paused, barely breathing. "I shall know before long."

"You believe in a life hereafter?"

"Absolutely." He paused again. "It is possible that in that life, failure is punished more than sin."

Martin leaned over and pressed the glassy hand which now lay relaxed and flaccid. That hand fascinated him. It so narrowly escaped the cold of death, and needed so little for its living preservation. "Any man with your fortitude has not failed," he said.

This was a strange conversation for him to be having. It was so foreign to his nature, or as if there were a nature in Martin which he now discovered for the first time. Talking about God, feeling so damnably sorry for this poor wreck lying back so pale and lost among the pillows . . . Unaccustomed moisture gathered in his eyes to blur the sight. Axel had been a man of talents from which Martin could have benefited, and Axel had withheld those talents. And here Martin was, being sorry for him, and talking about God with him. Martin hadn't thought very much about God, up to then. Not since he had been a small boy, going to the village church with his mother and father, and staring at the tall windows paned in very beautiful stained glass. He had never seen such beautiful glass anywhere, except in the church where the funeral of the elder Morgan had been held. He had always been extraordinarily sensitive to beauty.

That was one of the motivations in life which had spurred him on. He would not have cared to live as Axel lived, in an ugly little room like this one. It was how failure was punished—not in the life hereafter, as Axel had said, but in having to live on earth in the way Axel lived. It could have been worse. The place was orderly and clean, and there were some bright curtains in the windows. Martin wouldn't have minded it so much if it hadn't been so familiar. It was what he had succeeded in leaving behind him, and here it was again. It struck him then with a sense of shock. It

was only now, much later—now, when he was an old man—that he made the discovery that you never leave anything behind. Everything you ever had remained with you always as a burden, and that was what growing old was—the burden's increasing bulk.

Yet, according to that, it would be those who never had anything who stayed young the longest. Which wasn't so. Or there might be a strength to come with age, a strength given by this God of Axel's, just for the uses of burdens. Martin thought of these things now, and he knew that he had thought of them then for the first time—not wholly, but at least in part. It had been as if, in this room which reminded him of a room in a doll's house, he had entered on a new division of his existence. He had uncovered something in himself which hadn't been visible before that day. He had rung a bell and climbed stairs and walked into a world which—on the surface—was familiar. Beneath the surface, it was wholly new. At the end of the hall Martin heard a door open and shut, and then steps approaching—firm heavy steps.

"Here comes Anna," Axel said.

Martin rose. Anna was older than he remembered her as being, and stouter, and her hair, once yellow, showed gray beneath her stiff hat. For a moment, distinctly measurable, no one spoke. Axel broke the silence:

"You remember my cousin Martin, Anna?"

"Good day to you, Martin."

Martin had stepped forward. "Good day, Anna." He didn't offer her his hand. She might not have taken it, though she had greeted him civilly enough. What else could she do in her own house, she seemed to say with the greeting. She couldn't have taken his hand very well, in any case. She was carrying a large bag made of a sort of fishnet, and now nodular with packages. The spiny ends of onions protruded from its top, and a variety of supplies,

wrapped and unwrapped, could be discerned through its meshes. "I see you have been to the market," Martin observed.

"Yes," said Anna. She stood there, as though waiting for him to leave.

Martin was conscious of having made a comment unnecessarily obvious. Anna looked exactly what she was, a stout middle-aged peasant woman who had been handsome in her youth, and any housewifely duty she performed could be accepted as self-evident. It would have been more in order for Martin to make some explanation of his own presence, but she asked none. She could take no interest in why he had come—or why he did anything, for that matter.

"Anna," said Martin, "I should like to speak to you alone."

"What can you have to say to me?"

"I beg of you—"

"I know what he has to say," Axel put in. "It will do no good, but let him say it if he wants to."

"The only place I can take you is the kitchen," she told Martin. "We have no parlor."

"There could be no better place," Martin said.

"Oh, very well—" Anna led the way abruptly down the dark narrow hall. The kitchen was at the other end of it, near the front door.

In the middle of the room, which seemed larger than Axel's, there was a very solid table. Its wooden top was scrubbed to a state of almost surgical cleanliness. Everything was scrubbed like that. One might have eaten dinner off the floor, as the old phrase goes. One entire end of the room was taken up by a very elaborate stove. This was a piece of equipment far too gaudy for its surroundings, putting these in some way at fault.

"You do much cooking?" Martin asked.

"I make cakes."

Martin remembered now. Axel had told him that Anna made cakes and sold them.

She noticed him looking at the stove. "Martha bought it for me," she explained. "I liked the old one better, but Martha always has her way. She bought it with your money, so I suppose you have the right to know. Her taking that money was none of my doing. But it isn't the stove or the money that you're in here to talk about. What is it?"

"It's about Axel. If you could persuade him to come to the hospital, something might be done. He says he wishes to be left in peace. He would have peace there. He would have everything. I should see to it, personally, that he did."

"We are already beholden to you enough."

"Axel's life—"

"That milk is already spilt," said Anna. "Two years ago, when they took the cancer, it was then too late, the doctor told me. It's a wonder he has lived as long as he has."

Anna had opened her bag and was busying herself in putting away her purchases. Martin followed her about the room. "I admit the chance is slender, but in such a matter one leaves no stone unturned. Surely, you would not let your personal enmity towards me stand in his way?"

Anna was transferring some butter from paper to a bowl. "No, I would not do that. If I really thought Axel could be cured I would drive a bargain with the devil himself." She spoke quite without anger, as though they both could accept the fact that Martin and the devil were as one. "It would be just for nothing. Besides," she went on, "he does not wish to go. This is his home, and he is comfortable here. I make him very comfortable. He has a dread of being moved."

"And he looks as if the merest puff of air could move him anywhere," said Martin.

"I know how he looks, but he's stronger than you think."

"That's why I can't help feeling he has a chance."

Anna turned to him. "Would it be a chance good enough to be worth all the effort and all the pain he would have to endure?"

A large part of Martin's success in life had come from his instinctive talent in choosing the right argument and the right word at the right moment. It was a talent as potent in the council chamber as in the stokehole. Not any mere glibness of words, but as if he could—at will—unveil the workings of his adversary's mind, walk in on any stubbornness or opposition, rendering these helpless. Martin knew this advantage he had over people—he never hesitated to press it. He did so now:

"He would not mind the pain too greatly. He is so brave. And it is a chance which it is our duty—your duty—to see that he takes. His life is in your hands, Anna, and I don't have to tell you what a poor place the world will be without him."

Things had come to a strange pass, Martin's telling Anna what her duty was, and Anna's listening. She would not take kindly to any duty outlined for her by Martin, and here she was, doing it.

"You think if I told him he should go to the hospital, he would go?"

"I'm sure of it. He would do anything you say—he always has. Which has, at times, been my misfortune."

Anna looked at him. "I know."

But there were things that Anna didn't know. That Martin was a worker of spells, for instance. How could Anna have been aware of the nature of such spells? They had a physical base, too, wholly apart from what he said. There was a strength in him of which people were agreeably conscious, and desired to feel themselves one with by obeying. From all this it was Axel, only, who had proved himself immune. Anna was not Axel.

"You think it is my duty to tell him to go?"

"Yes."

"I'll do what I can."

"I'll get the very best doctor for his particular case," said Martin. "I'll have him here to-morrow. He can decide a number of things you and I wouldn't know about."

"He will bring him to the hospital?"

"That will follow."

"I don't know why you should be taking so much trouble—all of a sudden."

"I should have taken it a long time ago. If I had come to you, then, rather than to Axel . . . I can never forgive myself. But of course, Anna, you always hated me."

"I still hate you. And now—if you'll excuse me—I have work to do."

Martin opened the kitchen door which Anna had closed, to insure the privacy of their talk. "I'm afraid I've kept you from it. I'll just get my hat in Axel's room—"

"Axel may be asleep now."

"I shan't wake him. Goodbye, Anna—"

She was a grand woman.

Axel wasn't asleep. His room, which had been settling into the late June dusk, was flooded with light. The light came from a chandelier high in the ceiling. This was a makeshift fixture, made from a brass pipe originally designed for gas, to which four bulbs were fastened. But the source of the light was unimportant as long as it was there. Because it would have been too bad if the tall straight figure standing by Axel's bed were in any way obscured for Martin's sight.

That was an image, still timeless and clear. With no effort of memory, he looked at it now. There it was for him to see. There was Martha. Martha had changed since then. She

had grown into a woman, all the little awkward edges of her smoothed away. You could never fancy her now in any situation of which she would not be master, or couple fear with her, or shyness. But this image which had remained so clear for Martin during all these ensuing years, was that of a very young girl. What beauty it had was that of a pressure as yet unreleased, but existing—bent for the spring—in a state of suspense.

If it took no effort of memory for Martin to recall the girl as she had been then, it took a great deal of effort for him to arrive at any likely or rational explanation of the effect which seeing her produced in him.

He must first recall what he himself had been at that time—a middle-aged man, who'd had his fill of life and women, a man of grave and pressing business, who must have been tired though he didn't know it, a man who must have been quite aware that a crook of his finger would bring to him almost any woman he chose to favor. This wasn't the Martin of the inn at Odense. This wasn't the Martin of the Lakes' library in Pittsburgh, seeing for the first time the woman he married. Those Martins had been young and eager, filled with the lusts of youth, informed with urges bestial and god-like and unfulfilled. No, this middle-aged man, who stood in the doorway of that starkly lighted little room, was a different Martin from either of these. And the girl, his sight of whom was of an image to be forever worshipped, had about her the glamor neither of strangeness nor of beauty. Her father had been quite right about her. She wasn't pretty. Emanuel Safford had been quite right about her—she wasn't the frippery kind. And her mother had been quite right about her, she would always have her way. Would it be her way to enslave Martin, as a fisherman, casting a line idly for perch, brings to the surface some sea monster who has strayed into the quiet harbor by the most unlikely of fortunes?

That Martin should be so enslaved—that he couldn't have been more stricken by a shot from one of his own guns—or had the thing which happened to him happen in any briefer instant, was all a phenomenon beyond reason. It was certainly beyond the probabilities. It had something the quality of revelation. This was as far as reason took him. The rest was faith. There would be, of course, some peculiar receptivity in his inner being which made such things possible. Because it was within his inner being that Martha made herself immediately at home. Martha was tall and awkward, a creature of lengths still unrelated, standing by her father's bed, gazing down at the supine figure with a concentration which raised the heavy muscles that formed the crest of her dark eyebrows. She looked like Axel, though with none of Axel's lightness of spirit. She also looked a little like her great-aunt, Martin's mother, though lacking as yet a certain physical magnificence possessed by that particular kinswoman. There was an odd and fleeting reminder in her of Martin's daughter Sarah, deriving doubtless from some unknown forebear the two cousins had in common. There was something in her, too, of Martin himself, as though recognizing the same blood stream. At any rate, she was of Martin's own people. He had been away from his own people for a long time, and was now returned to them.

Martin had made no sound or move, but the girl must have become aware of a new presence, because she broke the stillness of her vigil with something the same motion an animal might make, apprised suddenly of the presence of a hunter. Martin was not a hunter—never less so. As she looked at him, he saw her eyes. He was puzzled about what color they might be, though the light fell on them full. Gray, he discovered afterwards. But they could be almost black. They shed a brilliance in a face otherwise pale. All eyes, her face seemed to be. She was startled and possibly

shy, but none of this showed in these eyes of hers, which had, instead, the steady uncompromising gaze, the peculiar and vaulting ambition, characteristic of conquerors.

"This is Martha." Axel's voice barely affected the silence.

"Of course! It couldn't be anyone else!" Martin realized that his own voice affected the silence—shattered it completely. And he hadn't intended to shout. More gently he spoke to Martha: "I'm your cousin, Martin Lyndendaal."

"Yes, Father's been telling me."

They were all speaking in Danish. Martin noticed, somewhat to his surprise, that Martha's Danish had about it a slight slur of accent. Naturally, as it was not her native tongue. She put forth a rather long-fingered hand to Martin. It was warm and smooth, but you could sense the finely articulated bones.

"I came," said Martin, "to thank you for your letter."

"He's having the money you sent him put in a gold frame," Axel vouchsafed.

"He's what?" said Martha.

Axel shouldn't have said that. "Put in a frame like a picture," Martin explained. "You wouldn't deny me the pleasure of hanging it on the wall of my office?"

"It's such a funny thing to do with twenty dollars," Martha mused, and then—in some haste—"But, after all, it's yours to do with as you like!"

"I'll send you a receipt," said Martin.

"You don't have to—"

"Or, better yet, you can come and see it some time."

"Oh, I should like that!"

He might have been offering to take her to the circus, the way she spoke. It shocked him a little, how young she was. There was something in his regard for her like a regard for a much loved child—a kind of closeness, and a desire to protect, and a sense of wonder, too. But he had no child of his own who merited such, and as for the closeness, he

had never been close—not even to Sarah. Something had gone wrong in Martin's relation to his own children. He knew this then, as he hadn't known it before. His own children—Martha was one of them. She was the only one. He must find out what she would like, in all ways.

"If Martha comes to work for you," said Axel from his bed, "she'll have plenty of chance to see how her money looks in its frame."

"Wasn't it lucky," Martha went on, "that I didn't send Mr. Lyndendaal the gold piece that Mother wanted me to send him?"

"What gold piece was that?" asked Martin.

It was Axel who explained it further: "It is a gold piece that Anna found years ago in a pocket of my coat. She has always insisted upon keeping it—would never spend it, no matter what the need. She was waiting, she said, for the suitable moment for its return."

So that was where the coin had been all these years, and why Axel had never mentioned it. "She evidently thought the moment had come," Martin smiled.

"But Martha didn't agree with her. Martha said it was her obligation, and she would settle it in her own way. Do they still hand out gold pieces at directors' meetings, Martin?"

"No, the practice has been discontinued. The directors took to gambling with them, and one of our number is a man of very high principles—he doesn't approve of gambling. But I thought you didn't know anything about Martha's letter to me, Axel?"

"I didn't until you told me. And Martha has just now been filling in the details."

"I see. Well, tell your mother, Martha—and by the way, don't call me Mr. Lyndendaal, Cousin Martin is my name—tell your mother that when she has forgiven me, she may present the gold piece either to me or to mine."

Martha obviously had had no idea what most of this discussion had been about, but this at least was a definite command, whatever it might mean. "I'll be glad to tell her—Cousin Martin. But it was lucky I didn't send it to you, wasn't it? Because a coin like that would have been awfully hard to put in a frame—much harder than a bill. You will let me come and see it, won't you? I mean the frame."

Axel sounded almost pettish. "I told you, Martha, you'll have plenty of chance when you're working in Cousin Martin's office—"

Martha turned. "We'll talk of that later, Father."

Yes, much later. Martin wasn't sure now that he wanted Martha to work for him. But he had made the offer. If he was not to carry it out, he would have to provide an alternative. He must think over what this might be. But Axel led him to the perfect one.

"Martha isn't through school for three weeks yet. In a way it seems a pity, her being through so soon."

"Yes," said Martin, "it is a pity. She ought to go to college. Wouldn't you like to go to college, Martha? I'm sure you'd do well there."

A voice came from the hall. "She knows too much already—that's the trouble with her."

Anna re-entered the room. It was clear from her look that she approved of nothing she saw there.

"I was trying to be helpful, merely," Martin countered.

"Do you think being helpful will make it easier for St. Peter to let you pass the Heavenly Gates?"

"Why, Anna—my time for such thoughts is not yet!"

"One never knows." Anna pronounced the simple words as if they were a curse. And then she went over to where Martin's hat was, and picked it up and gave it to him. "Don't forget," she said, "I made you one promise—not two."

She was using Axel as a shield—a shield both for herself and for her child. For Axel, Martin had won the fight. For

Martha, the fight was but begun. There was all the time in the world for that. First things first. The sick man must come first. There was nothing for Martin to do now, except to take his leave.

"We'll talk about the college," he said, "when I come again."

His adversary knew what rights she had and what rights she hadn't. "I can't very well keep you from coming—this isn't my house any more. Besides, you've been very generous."

"Meanwhile, I'll leave you to fulfill the one promise," said Martin at the door. He gave her this with a smile. He felt in a mood for smiling. "Goodbye, Axel—"

Axel didn't speak, but raised his hand for farewell.

"And, Martha—goodbye—"

"I'll see you to your car," said Martha, oddly cheerful, too.

That expedition the newly discovered cousins made together down the three flights of stairs had none of the qualities or connotations of descent.

"You mustn't mind Mother," said Martha, in English.

"I don't, I assure you. The keen sword crossing is the thing of which I have too little now."

"Yes," said Martha, "I know. Most people are such fools."

The statement was unexpected, coming from a child. But Martha wasn't a child. Her being such was merely what Martin was trying to believe.

"You see," she went on—she was extraordinarily fluent in the tongue which she evidently regarded as her own—"you see, Mother doesn't like you. And don't get any idea she'd take it lying down, my coming to work for you, because she wouldn't. She never has liked you—I don't just know why. And she doesn't believe much in education, anyway. She would resent it horribly if I went to college, and your making it possible—which I suppose was what you had in

view—would be the finishing touch! Oh, don't think I'm apologizing for her—I'm not! She's a wonderful person—even if she does get mad when she shouldn't."

"If your mother had gone to college herself, perhaps she wouldn't get mad so easily," Martin suggested.

Martha paused a moment in what seemed to him an unnecessarily headlong flight. "That's an ideal! Anyway, she wouldn't show it. That's one thing education is supposed to do, isn't it? Teach you to control yourself—not show things? But Mother knows quite a lot—a lot you never pick up in school."

They had reached the bottom of the stairs, and Martha opened the door to the vestibule where all the bells were. Once there, she faced him. A tendril of her hair had fallen across her forehead. It had become loosed from the practical but unprepossessing bun in which the mass of it was confined. In the bright light of Axel's room Martin had tried to decide the color it was—not gold or copper, exactly, but much like the little flames which sometimes licked through a banked fire. How much she resembled Axel—the same raised brows, the rather narrow chin, the nose inclined to sharpness. Martin felt himself looking at Axel in a mirror which magically altered the reflection it gave back.

Axel was dying. You could see the death in his face. His bed there was a bed of fire. He was burning it to ashes, and from these ashes had arisen this second human being. There was a myth about that. There was some story of a fabulous bird which, in dying, fertilizes its nest and so—born of flame and death—a creature comes forth strong and beautiful. Martha wasn't beautiful. No, you couldn't honestly say that of her. But what would beauty be in comparison with what she was? She was clever. That had been proved. What she really had in her was a great simplicity. And there was a force about her. It was a force as pungent

as an aromatic spirit and as poignant as grief. Her mere presence made for an elation of the soul. But Martin, conscious as he was of all this, in spite of the consciousness, or because of it, must still be occupied in providing a suitable alternative to the continued sight of her, which might be more than he could at present bear. College took four years, and four years was a long time.

"The thing is, Martha, do you yourself want to go to college?"

"Frankly—no."

"Why not?"

"At school they think I'm a scholar. But it's merely that I can learn anything out of a book, and don't take much time about it."

"A college degree has a certain value, apart from being a scholar. It opens the door to so many things."

She cut him off. "Yes, I know. But I have other plans." Martin divined that these plans did not include coming to work for him. His divination had been right. "When I leave school," Martha announced, "I'm going into business for myself."

"And what business are you going into?"

She was looking at him so straight that she looked down his laughter, which unexpectedly rang out and echoed in the hallway—the vestibule, rather—and then died in his throat.

"The cake business. I plan to sell the cakes my mother makes."

"And what does your mother say to that?"

"She doesn't like it very much."

"But you will have your way, in spite of her?"

"Somebody has to have their way!"

"Yes—somebody."

These last sentences had brought them out through the vestibule, and down into the street. Martin's chauffeur was

holding the door of his car open for him. If Martin could have had his way, he would have made Martha get in, and got in himself, and driven with her to some distant haven from which neither would have had to consider a return. But things were not as easy as that. You could come to America and make a fortune, and surmount difficulties insuperable, and batter your way to an eminence the chances for the attainment of which would be all against you. But here was a fortune and an eminence never to be reached, never to be possessed. You could take what you wanted so often and so much that the taking could come to seem a mere blind stretching forth of the hand. But this you could not take.

In place of conquest, there would be watching—protection—the laying down of the velvet carpet against any mire or any stumbling. And, for even so much of privilege, you must hold yourself in leash forever. You must pretend it was nothing, never relaxing the pretence. There was no friend to whom you could say, "This is my woman and my child and my companion. I have found her. We have found each other. I hesitate to speak before her, because I fear to stem the easy flow of her delightful speech. I dare not think, lest her own thought be barred. I must not look away, for missing one fleeting aspect of what she is."

But none of this could Martin say. What he did say came mechanically, as though a muscle worked, not under control of the will. "I mustn't keep you—I have delayed your supper."

Martha hastened to set him right on the Christiansen habit of supper. "Mother and I had our supper hours ago—before we went out. We have a bite again, before we go to bed—cocoa, usually."

"And your father?"

"He eats every few hours—soup and gruel—things like that."

"How will your mother manage your cake making, with all else she has to do?"

"She won't have all else to do. I'm thinking of taking a little shop with a kitchen in the back. I shall have a nurse here. I still have fifteen hundred dollars. I'd have had more, but—"

"You bought a stove," said Martin.

"That can be moved to the new place—it won't be wasted."

Martin hadn't thought it would be. She might have bought some clothes, he thought. Tweeds would become her—fine Scottish tweeds fitted snugly over her broad shoulders—and cool linens of whiteness and purity. As it was, she was neat—reasonably so—and clean. The skirt she wore was of an indiscriminate dark woolen, no longer new, and her blouse might have been a shirt for which Axel, in his present state, could have no use.

Martin lingered, with his foot on the running board. "You must let me know what more I can do. Establishing your own business is an expensive procedure—always more so than you figure."

"Why—thank you—"

He became aware that the man-servant was listening to all this with an interest matched only by his surprise. Martha was hardly the type of young woman Martin Lyndendaal might be expected to set up in business—or assist towards that end. And any young woman whom Martin would drive miles to see would not be so amply provided with parents, such as a mother who made cakes and a father who was, from the talk, a confirmed invalid. And yet there the situation was—the unscrupulous libertine offering aid to the young girl who had happened to strike his fancy, and she innocently thanking him. That was how it must have seemed to a stranger, just as toothsome as that, and just as trite. The stranger would not take into account the particular character of the persons involved. The character . . .

There was the point which saved the situation. Or did it save it? It made of it at least an entirely different one from that to be casually observed.

Martin had it in his mind to explain to the servant that his own future acts could never be predicted by means of his past ones. The man wouldn't know that, being comparatively new in the Lyndendaal household. He was one of Frances's wounded Frenchmen: *blessés*, she called them—and paid for their passage over, and found them suitable employment. This one could speak English and was an excellent driver. He'd driven an ambulance in the region between Paris and Verdun. He was entitled, possibly, to any diversion he could privately gain from the talk between Martin and Martha. So quiet, it was, so peaceful, so different from a battlefield.

Martin, driving on at last, wrenching himself away from this spot on earth which had grown suddenly precious to him, calling up in himself the will to do this dismembering severance, was occupied—peculiarly—not so much with what had happened as with what would happen, with what could happen. There was a feeling in him very close to fear.

Now, as an old man, he could look back with a degree of calm, and see the happiness which Martha had brought him, and be grateful for it. Matters had worked out, after a fashion. But then he had no such assurance. He had other assurances—his age, for one of them. If he had been young then—just reasonably young at that first meeting—the full responsibility would not have been his alone. If he had been then as he had been twenty-five years before that time, or even twenty, possibly Martha could have loved him as he had loved her. In fact, years later, she told him that she had. Much good had it done him then, under the circumstances. She told him, too, that he was old and thought she was a child, and it was just something foolish. Something foolish, and he was old . . . If he hadn't been so old—

thirty-five years older than she was, and this difference never changed—she might have loved him without self-ridicule, and without the self-ridicule which was for Martin himself an added barrier.

Martha didn't mind barriers. She could brush them aside without scruple, as she might kick a stone from any path she chose to take. Nothing could have been more foreign to Martin's nature than to have been the passive element in any compound or fusion or action. But if he had been young then, the responsibility would not have been wholly his, and he would have had no choice but to have accepted any decision she might have made.

As it was, she was like a bright firm fruit on the lowest limb of the fruit tree, and yet no fruit that Adam took could have been more hedged about with warning. There was no law to stop the plucking—none except the withering and the rotting which would be then set free. Martin could watch and he could protect. As part of love, he wanted to do both these things. But—even more than the eventual possession which was also part of it—he wanted to join his whole life with Martha's, to draw no essential breath without her. Union—that was it—close and irrevocable. Now, as an old man, looking back, he could see that in some measure he'd had his union. But that he had done so was largely Martha's doing—Martha, hard as she was, and without scruple about so much, and settling her obligations in her own way, to the last penny. Possibly she still loved him. No, she couldn't love this wreck that he knew he had become. But she kept him alive just by her presence in a world he couldn't bear to leave on account of her.

PART III

Martin was still sitting by the large bay window. The leaves of the Park trees had turned to the color of autumn. And then, quite suddenly, they were no color at all, because it was impossible for him to see them, where they had fallen. The leaves fell early this year. It wasn't Martin's imagination. Several people had spoken of it, including Benison. It was kind of Benison to keep coming to see him, especially as Martin had made it only too clear that there would be no book.

"I can't have you writing a book about me," Martin told him. "Any book that I would consent to your writing would be valueless—it couldn't tell the truth. There are too many other people concerned, entirely apart from me. We'll just have to forget about the whole project. I've written to the publisher—"

"Yes, I know you have—"

"I put it on the grounds of my failing health. You see, a few months ago I had the idea that I might get better. Now I know I shan't. Knowing that, I haven't the energy, even if I wanted to, to give you the necessary data."

"I saw your letter."

"I'm merely confirming its contents."

"Don't let the doctors kid you," said Benison. "Of course you'll get well! But I can see that you have to save your strength every way you can. As for my coming here, don't worry about it. I'm coming now on my own time—because I like to come. That is, if you don't mind—"

"No, I don't mind. I'm glad to have you."

"Then that's all right. Don't think the difficulties which would arise in writing your biography are unique, Mr. Lyncendaal. They always come up in any book of that sort, to a certain extent. Now if I were writing a novel about you—"

"God forbid!" Martin cut in.

"Yes, I know, but if I were, you and everyone else would serve merely as a point of departure, and the completed invented pattern would have a very much greater truth about it than any piecemeal knowledge to be gained from what you call data."

Benison was always saying things like that. They were probably the A B C's of his trade—a trade not Martin's. Possibly Benison came to see him because he liked the brand of Scotch with which Eric served him, and he liked poking about this great room, this great lethal chamber of a room, which had been so sweetly designed for glory. He borrowed some of the books that lined the walls. Martin liked to feel that someone read them. And the occasional slits the absent volumes left behind them were like punctuation marks in a page otherwise dull. Shelf on shelf, on one wall they went up nearly to the ceiling, and if no shelf was disturbed, why have books at all? Martin had known a man who had a library filled with leather-backed dummies, to be obtained at so much a foot.

Martin hadn't liked Benison at first. He'd grown to like him better. That was because he'd grown to know him better, and the trouble had been at first that he'd never been in the way of knowing any young men of his kind. Neither the business nor the social circle in which Martin had moved was a place where writers were apt to gather. Besides, Benison was distinctly of a new generation—just as distinctly as were Martin's own grandchildren, though he was a good deal older than they were. Martin could think clearly of the

past. The present was less clear. The future was obscured by a high mountain wall of stone. And it was a safe, warm selfish feeling to know that for him, at least, there could be so little future. But Benison, and Martin's grandchildren, took this future easily, as it were in their stride. They were armed to face any turbulence of disaster or any transfiguration of triumph. They would face either crest, you felt, with a casual and slightly cynical lift of the eyebrow, and be apt to greet the new dawn with an expression already much on their lips—"So what?" It was a phrase useful for disclaiming the importance of almost anything. It might have been useful to Martin if it hadn't come too late. For so many years he had been weighed down with importance, and the decisions he was supposed to make and the circumstances he was supposed to change.

"Do you think you'll go into the war?" he asked Benison. "A lot of young fellows seem to be doing it. I mean this new war."

"I might—I missed the other one. It would seem too bad if I didn't get in on this one. I'm working on the idea. But every newspaper man in the country is pulling wires. My newspaper work has been mostly on the literary end—book reviews and such."

"I didn't mean as a news correspondent—I meant as a soldier."

"Oh—the Foreign Legion—something like that. The army's so damnably mechanized now—you have to know your stuff or they don't want you. I had a chance to go to Spain a few years ago. I should have taken it—particularly as I was too young for the other war."

"Why didn't you go to Spain?"

"My mother didn't like the idea. But she's married again now and isn't nearly so—"

And there had been a time when Martin had doubted if Benison had ever had a mother! But it wasn't confirmation

of this lady's existence which made this talk memorable. Martin had caught a phrase—the other war. By this, Benison had meant the Great War, the World War—now known as the Other War. Martin had predicted the changed reference—he hadn't realized it would come so soon. Well, Martin was thinking about the past. He could see now that he must fight to think of it, because in eyes other than his own, the past was already growing dim.

There had been problems then, as now—problems and burdens. That these problems and burdens had then been Martin's, and that the present ones were not Martin's, was wherein the difference lay. There had been the question of what to do about his son Julian, becoming every day more insistent.

"You're making guns," Axel had said, "and—if the United States gets into the war—he'll have to take his chance before the guns other men make."

It was a chance that Martin had been willing enough that Julian should take. Europeans were used to war, they were used to sending their sons. The hysteria Americans felt in the matter was foreign to their nature. Martin was a man with two countries—Denmark and the United States. The last named was at war, and Martin was doing all he could. Julian wasn't doing anything.

Julian was twenty, this summer of 1917. He wasn't a child any more. In September, when he would be within three months of twenty-one, he would be eligible for an officers' training camp. Frances was in favor of waiting for this. Before September anything might happen. That was the trouble—anything might. The Selective Service Act, passed in May, called for the conscription of a million men. Fortunately for Julian, the ages ran from twenty-one to thirty. Later, these age limits might be extended. The men were divided into classes. Those who did work vital to the carrying on of the war would not be called. Which appeared to

make it easy. Let his father give Julian a job—Julian, who had never done a day's work in his life! Much to the surprise of both Julian and Frances, Martin refused. When Julian was twenty-one, Martin could see that this refusal would become more difficult. Of course if Julian got into the training camp, and completed the course there, he might—through pull—obtain some staff position in which his precious hide would be safe. But Martin doubted very much if Julian could complete the course. His college career had certainly not given hope of any such thing. And then what?

Other men's sons were volunteering. The son of Martin, the munition maker, loafed at Newport. "I'm in no hurry," he told his father, "to be run through by some squarehead's bayonet."

"Some what?"

"That's what they call the German soldiers—squareheads."

"Oh, do they? I didn't know. They used to call the Swedes squareheads. But you won't be run through by a bayonet. You'll come back. A good army training might be the making of you."

"Oh, yes? That's what you think—anything to get rid of me. And I'll always turn up, like a bad penny. Saving your face—that's all you care about. You're making so much money on guns, if I don't go it'll look funny. No, thanks—I'm not having any."

Martin tried to put it to Julian, how he felt: "This country has given you a great deal. If you'd been my son in Denmark, you wouldn't have had nearly as much. You wouldn't have been top dog, as you are now, because I wouldn't have risen above my class—or at least not so far above it. You might have been like your cousins, working in the fields, or been a factory hand or a clerk. In this country I've had opportunities peculiarly suited to my talents. You owe it something for that, don't you? Something for the fine houses and the servants and the fast cars, and—more

than all—for being who you are. I could get you a job at my mills and keep you there till the war was over. Or, if and when you complete this officer's training, I could get you a soft place on some general's staff well back of the lines. But why should I bother?"

"You'd rather see me sitting in the mud, eaten up with lice?"

"A few lice won't hurt you. When I was your age, I—"

"I know—you were shoveling coal on the high seas. I don't see what that has to do with it."

"You've no idea how much," said Martin.

"Don't think for a minute, I want a job in your damned mills. But as long as having one seems to be the only perfectly air-tight way of getting out of—"

"Doing your duty?"

"As you so aptly put it, why should I bother?"

Martin looked at him then. Unsatisfactory as this talk was, it was the first consecutive conversation he ever remembered having had with him. There had been a word here and there, and a figure facing him for a moment—supposedly contrite, but at least sullen and perverse—and getting through with the ordeal of the meeting as soon as might be. This Julian was more definite—more definitely intractable. The way he was slumped down in the chair opposite the big desk, his hands thrust deep in the pockets of his coat, his shock of hair uncombed from the night of travel he had put in to get here, showed that the mold, into which he had been forming all his life, was now setting to a self-designed rebellion against any authority whatever. He owed his country nothing and his father nothing—certainly no outward sign of respect. Why should he bother? He wouldn't have bothered to come here now, except that Martin was the possessor of a guarantee of safety—perfectly air-tight. He counted on him for that, as he always had

counted on him for everything. No one knew when the age limit might be extended, and then it would be too late. He was able-bodied. He had, to understate the case, no dependents.

"You've never liked me," Julian went on. "You'll be glad if I get killed!"

"No, Julian, no—that's not true."

"Well, I won't be—whether it's true or not."

"If you're so sure, why take my time?"

Martin didn't want him to get killed. Even slouched and slumped, and hidden in the loose coat he was wearing against the summer rain, he was a handsome boy. Martin had never noticed before just how handsome he was. He was blond as a Swede—or a squarehead. He was a fine figure of youth. What had gone wrong with him? It suddenly struck Martin that Julian had no intention of going to war, no matter what happened. Apart from the chance of getting killed, he would refuse to subject himself to the discipline of the army. What about the discipline of the mills?

"If the draft finally reached you," said Martin, "it wouldn't be so easy to evade it. People get sent to prison for that, in war time."

Julian looked at him quickly. "Not me—"

"No, not you. You could get away with it. I fancy in the past you've got away with a lot of things. I know about some of them—some I don't. But this would be a little different."

"The laugh would be on you, wouldn't it? Your son getting sent to prison for evading the draft."

"The laugh on me would be terrific. But there isn't going to be any laugh."

"I'll say there isn't! You'll fix it up some way."

"Yes—some way." Martin rose. "In fact, I'll fix it up right now."

Julian looked at him again and got to his feet. If he'd stood up straight, there would have been no difference between the height of the two of them.

"How are you going to fix it?" he asked.

"You'll find out—"

An idea had come to Martin. After all, he'd had his start up the ladder by his success in handling just such burly rebellious fellows as this one, who happened to be his son. Speed—that was the way you did it—you could stampede them into doing what you wished. They were slow of thought and movement, and all you needed was to be one jump ahead of them. He picked up Julian's hat and thrust it at him— "Come on—"

"Where to?"

"Just down the street a ways—"

There was a recruiting station down the street. It was worth trying. Nothing to lose if it didn't work, except a row with Frances for the attempt. Frances might not make a row. But he didn't see her often enough for that to matter. The army would take Julian if they had the chance. They needed big strong fellows such as he. Let them bother with him if he wouldn't bother. And Martin himself had plenty of other things to do.

Almost automatically, as if for warrant, Martin's eye was drawn to the oblong of gold that framed Martha's twenty dollar bill. Julian turned to see what he was looking at. "What's that?"

"Never mind it!"

Julian did mind it. He examined it with more interest than he usually took in anything. "God, that's a neat job! The best counterfeit I ever saw." He put out his hand to take it down.

"Leave that alone!"

"I'll bet if I could get that out of the frame, I'd have no trouble using it for cash."

"The trouble would come after," Martin said.

Julian laughed a little and took the precious object from its place. There was a struggle, and Martin got it from him. It was one of those scuffles which might, at any moment, develop into something more. The door of the private office opened and Charlie Rosch came in.

"Say—what's going on here?"

Rosch had got by Miss Bellows. He could get by anyone. Rosch had been out of the Steel Corporation for some years, and had organized a group of other plants which, during the war, were immensely profitable.

"Nothing's going on," Martin explained, as he set the memento very carefully back where it belonged. "I was just protecting my property. You know my boy, don't you? This is Mr. Rosch, Julian."

"Oh, yes, I know your boy." Rosch shook Julian's hand in that hearty way of his.

"How do you do, sir?" the greeting was answered.

Julian had manners when he cared to use them, Martin admitted grudgingly. And then, still being angry, he told Rosch that which he ought to have kept to himself.

"This young man wants me to give him a job, so he won't have to go to war."

It was really Frances who wanted that. Frances always had everything figured in advance, and knew in advance all the directions in which the cat might jump. Julian himself would have been incapable of any such mental effort.

"I'm not so crazy about the idea," said Julian, "but, I ask you, what else can I do?"

"I'm not either," said Martin. "In fact, I don't feel that under the circumstances it would be wholly desirable."

"I quite see your point," said Rosch. "If you gave him a job it would cause talk. That wouldn't operate in my case, would it? Being as he's not my son." He turned to Julian. His hard bright eyes measured him. What the measure

proved, Martin didn't know. "Suppose I gave you a job, young man—how would that be?"

"Why, that would be fine, sir," said Julian. "Thank you very much."

"Always glad to do a favor for your father." Rosch walked over to Martin's desk and wrote something on a card he had taken from his pocket. "Most of my works are in Pittsburgh," he went on. "Now you hop on the train to-night and in the morning report there—see, I've written it down, and the name of the man you're to go to—" He handed the card to Julian.

Speed—that was the way you did it—be one jump ahead of them. Rosch knew this, just as well as Martin did. Martin didn't particularly want Julian to work for Rosch. He didn't want Rosch to find out how worthless the boy was. But he was glad, in a way, that Julian hadn't refused to work for him. That wouldn't have done, somehow.

"I'll be there, sir. Thanks again. So long, Father—" The young man picked up his hat and left.

Charlie Rosch, the rescuer . . . But Martin couldn't say anything but add his thanks to Julian's: "Much obliged, Charlie."

"Think nothing of it."

"But what in hell will you have him do? The percentage of unskilled labor is so low now in our business—"

"Oh, they'll find something."

"I suppose they will, if you say so. His mother'll be delighted."

"Yes," said Rosch, "I know. She wrote me about it a couple of weeks ago. Said it would be difficult for you—under the circumstances—and, therefore, she appealed to me. I think very highly of Mrs. Lyndendaal. But then, of course you know that."

"Any man who didn't think highly of her would be crazy," Martin answered.

"People have said a lot of things about me, Martin, but they've never said I was crazy."

Martin got a slightly new view of Charlie Rosch at that moment. There was something genuine about the man. He wasn't just a front and a blow-hard who'd been lucky.

"After all," Rosch went on, "I haven't got any kids of my own. It's too bad if I can't do something for someone else's kids."

"I hope you'll still feel that way after Julian's been working for you for a while."

"I know he doesn't amount to very much, but he's better than nothing, isn't he?"

Martin walked to the window and looked out at the much admired view. "I sometimes wonder. Oh, by the way, Charlie, I'm glad you came in. What about this new War Industries Board they're fixing up in Washington?"

Frances was a remarkable woman. There was nothing to which she could not find a solution. Her hands seemed to be folded. To look at her, she was the parasitic woman, the rich man's wife, concerned with nothing but the frivolities. To see her, beneath the look, she wielded a sceptre. The people under her sway took no step without her guidance or against her will, and—if they did—it was a futile step, and she had her way with them in the end. She sent Julian to Pittsburgh—that was one of her mistakes. She undoubtedly had a good deal to do with Sarah's marriage—that was another of them. Even she admitted this, finally, and—admitting it—she rescued Sarah in her own good time. Fanny, the laughing Fanny, was less influenced by her than anyone was. Perhaps she thought Fanny not worth her pains. Frances must have considered Hazzard Blue an unsuitable match for her daughter. Though possibly, being feminine, she couldn't get away from the compulsion of the captain's shoulder bars. Fanny married him in the midst of war. Besides, Frances liked men who rose, and Blue had risen a considerable dis-

tance since his career had started as a singing waiter in some Bowery café.

Blue had a warm smile and a cool head. And talent, of course. His success in the American theatre was duplicated in the Y.M.C.A. camps of France, where he sang *Over There*—so word came back, better than anybody sang it. He was decorated by General Foch for his services in keeping up the morale of the troops. But all that took place the following year. Fanny was married in the autumn following Julian's acceptance of Rosch's offer. The wedding took place beneath drawn swords, with the recently rescued countess as matron of honor. The transport carrying Blue sailed a few days later. So there were the two girls, still living at home, the bride of war and Sarah, who was getting a divorce. The count had been bought off rather handsomely. In the winter Sarah became a mother and Martin a grandfather. Fortunately the child was a girl. The title the count bore was a good inheritable title, and an heir might have led to complications.

Julian didn't do nearly so badly, working for Rosch, as Martin had feared he might. He stayed in Pittsburgh throughout the duration of the war. Martin was lulled into a false security about him. It seemed a solution—one of those solutions that solve the immediate problem, if nothing more. Julian helped keep the inventory books, was a checker, and did various odd jobs about the office. He never rose. He never made more than fifteen dollars a week all the time he was there, but his mother sent him money, of course, and he got along. He appeared to have found his level. The circle in which he now moved undoubtedly looked up to him.

There were other young men like that, sons of important men—self-made men, usually—who didn't thrive in the rarefied atmosphere to which they had been born, but harked back to some less thrifty strain, and picked for a personal sponsor among forebears some ne'er-do-well who had

counted that year successful when the doors of the local jail did not close upon him. They were at ease in the company of their inferiors, the advantages cast upon them by fortune being just sufficient to keep these inferiors from finding them out. Such was Julian, evidently. He held his job, though whether he would have held it without Rosch's oddly friendly eye on him might have been doubted. And he kept up a very non-informative sort of correspondence with his mother. She regarded his immurement in Pittsburgh as a pity, but the lesser of two evils. He was safe, and his being situated thus was, under the circumstances, perfectly logical. As for Martin, he thought Rosch had been a trifle intrusive in a strictly family affair, but he was nevertheless grateful to him for taking Julian off his hands. He was also, at moments, somewhat curious about how the boy really was behaving himself. Whenever he saw Rosch he always asked him. But Charlie Rosch had it down to a fine point, talking a great deal and saying nothing. The emerging impression was that Julian was behaving perfectly, and that Martin—in his mind at least—was a little hard on his son. Martin let it pass. He had other things to think about.

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In fact, there was so much to think about during this general period, and so many things happened, that the canvas of Martin's remembrance was over-crowded. It was difficult to pick his way among the jumble of it. A half a dozen wholly different activities seemed to be in progress all at once—a half a dozen wholly separate aspirations and desires. There was Martin's family—more in the foreground of his thought than they had been in years—what with Julian, and Fanny's marriage and Sarah's divorce. There was the load of work Martin was carrying. Just that alone would have

been enough—just this constant stretching of his capacities as far as they would go, and then a little farther. He was forever having to refuse offers of more work—presidencies, controls, chairmanships, some of which carried enormous salaries. He must regard such offers merely as honors. Each day contained twenty-four hours, and no more. And then there was the final illness of him who meant more to Martin than anyone else ever did, with the one exception now.

The highest medical opinion was available on Axel's condition. He was taken to the hospital and given every test known to science. Nothing could be done except wait for the end. The end was long in coming. At his own request, Axel was brought home. Summer dragged on into autumn and autumn to winter and he did not die. It took spring for that. At his bedside were Martin and Anna and Martha, and a hovering nurse and a harried and puzzled doctor. Axel had not spoken for several days. Suddenly he spoke:

"I want you all to know that it has not been as bad as it has seemed to be."

How did he know what it seemed? They left him alone with his wife then, and the last Martin ever saw of Axel, living, was a slight rising beneath bed covers and a head indenting a flat pillow. Some change in Anna's position blocked off that view.

The doctor was giving instructions to the nurse. "You can reach me—" he was saying. Anna came down the hall and beckoned him.

Martha started to follow them. Martin jerked her back.

"If they need you they'll tell you—"

"What's happened?"

"Nothing—" It was one of the few lies Martin ever told her.

It was plain enough what had happened, from the brief glimpse he'd had of Anna's face. But he wanted to shield the girl as much as he could, though it was part of his deeper

feeling for her that she never seemed to need shielding. She was brave, and there was no weakness in her. Axel's death couldn't be kept from her beyond that moment of grace. Anna came back and told her—told them both.

"I don't believe it," Martha said.

No utterance of sorrow beyond that. She sat, dry-eyed, through most of the night, as though employed with many disbeliefs. It was a way of grief that was rather terrible to Martin. It shut everyone out—everyone who might have shared her grief, like Martin himself. It would have been easier if they could have grieved together. Not hand in hand, but wherever Martin was, and whenever he thought of Axel with sorrow for his death, he would have liked to think of Martha, think of her as having a part of his own private sorrow. He wanted her to share with him in everything. If Martha had not grieved so deeply it would have been easier. And yet it would have been a lack in her—something to be forgiven. Martin would have forgiven her without question. But in one sense he was relieved—almost oddly so—that there was, in this instance, no need of such forgiveness.

The existence of Martha was something else for Martin to think about. Perhaps he had been wrong not to give her a job in his office, or, rather, not to insist that she come there. It wasn't any time to go into the cake business, what with the war rationing of flour and sugar. But Martha went in, in the face of all that.

She operated on a small scale, feeling her way and learning. She took a little shop around the corner from Court Street. Martin remembered this first shop very well indeed. It was a great deal like other small food shops of the day, and yet it wasn't. It was so bare and so clean—not overcrowded with a mass of unappetizing edibles, and not smelling of them either. There was just the smell of the freshly baked cakes, which were displayed beneath a glass dome at the front end of the wooden counter. At the rear was a cashier's

cage, and the door into the bakery. That was all, except the lettering on the shining window—"MARTHA CHRISTIANSEN. CAKES. WHOLESALE. RETAIL." The front door had an arrangement by which a bell rang when you entered and when you left. There was a girl to wait on customers. Martha didn't have much time for that, as she was occupied with more important matters. Most of the cakes were sold in quantity to restaurants. The rent of the shop and the kitchen attached to it was sixty dollars a month. You had to sell a lot of cakes, Martha said, to make up that, when you considered the price of flour and sugar and butter and eggs. Only the best eggs were used, and a very fair grade of butter. Then there was the gas and the wages of an assistant baker and of an errand boy, as well as what the girl in the shop was paid. Martha kept very accurate books on the whole thing.

While Axel was at the hospital, Anna was able to devote most of her time to the cakes. When Axel came home, some arrangement was made by which she took care of one baking a day, as she flatly refused to leave her husband wholly to the mercy of nurses. After Axel's death, having something to do and to think about was a godsend to Anna, and she and Martha moved to a little apartment near the shop. The success of the whole venture depended on Anna more than Martha quite realized. It was a venture in which Martha had absolute faith, and her faith seemed justified. Anna, Martin gathered, hardly shared this faith, however justified it seemed to be. The profits, though steady, were small, and the entire undertaking was burdensome. If Martha had taken a job they would, in some ways, have been better off. One kind of cake, they made—only one. Anna, an expert baker, had tried out a number of varieties, but this particular confection evidently filled a special need in the market for such things. The cakes were small—about the size of a small doughnut, and retailed at five cents. The

wholesale rate was less, of course. Martha named them CRUMPLE CAKES, and had the name registered in Washington.

Martin ran into his old friend, Emanuel Safford, on the street one day. Safford stopped him.

"I understand your young cousin has gone into the baking business."

"Yes, so I understand," said Martin.

"Do you know that eighty per cent of the people who go into business for themselves fail?"

"I thought the percentage was larger than that."

"And a woman in business for herself—"

"Time was," said Martin, "when it looked strange, seeing a woman in business that wasn't for herself—I mean, in someone's office."

"Possibly so, but it seems too bad."

"What seems too bad?"

"If she came to work for me, I'd pay her twelve dollars a week."

"I'd pay her twenty-five," said Martin, rendering Emanuel speechless.

It would have been all right, most of the time, if Martha had worked for Martin. He wasn't in his office much, and, when he was, he could have yielded only so much of himself to the consciousness of her presence. But he never could have treated her as he treated the others—Miss Bevans, for instance, who was Miss Bellows' assistant, and the rest. He would have had to ignore her completely, not even vouchsafing a casual greeting, because—otherwise—sooner or later, when he was tired or preoccupied or too much harried with his immediate problems to notice outward seemings, he would have given himself away.

He had never minded the talk there'd been about him. But the talk which would have developed if Martha had come to work for him, he would have minded on her ac-

count. Besides, Martha herself would have known how he felt about her, and he didn't want her to know that—at least he hadn't wanted her to know it. In the first place, she wouldn't—she couldn't, so he thought—have understood it. In the second, if she had, it would have wrought in her a change devastating and sudden.

Martha had changed as the years went on. But not because of Martin—not because of what he had said or had done or had been. Or if it were because of this, he didn't care to admit it, even in his innermost thinking. Martha might have married Julian in any case. She didn't need the seal of Martin's approval for what she did. It was one of her most characteristic qualities, that she never came begging to ask, "Shall I do this or that?" She knew exactly what she wanted to do, and, if this failed her, she never bewailed her fate. And as for Martin, he wasn't bewailing his own fate now, merely in thinking about these things. He wasn't plunging himself into a sticky bath of vain regrets that Martha had been daughter to him rather than wife. As a daughter, he could have her, and did, and could erect something between them that was both bond and barrier. He had helped her in every way he knew. She had wanted to go into business for herself, and without his help, she couldn't have done it. At least, he didn't see how she could.

He used to envy her so much—having a little cake business which, in spite of his help, and of her mother's, was really all her own. There was no reason why that business of Martha's shouldn't grow until every time you said Cake, your tongue formed the word Crumple, to go before it. Martin would have had more to regret, perhaps, if it hadn't been for CRUMPLE CAKES. As it was, he didn't have so much. Just a few things, here and there, which might have been a little different. Julian might have been different, and other things. But about Martha's project, he had nothing to wish

otherwise. CRUMPLE CAKES staring at you from every billboard and every newspaper. Crumple Cakes, fresh and delicious, served with coffee, with tea, lunch, supper or breakfast, or for that midnight snack. CRUMPLE CAKES, WHENEVER THE HOUR OF HUNGER STRIKES. He was guilty of no disloyalty to his own element of steel, to think in such manner, and to have begun such thinking at a period in his life when he was conscious that there were hours of hunger to be unappeased by either cake or metal.

It was curious how much, at this time, Martin thought about the future of the cake business, and how little about the larger and more general future, consideration of which occupied so many of his colleagues. This last was a matter into which he refused to be stampeded. And yet he knew how serious a problem confronted him and all the other steel men. Obviously, the end of the war would see the annihilation of much of the business that they had changed to conform to war's needs. They must prepare for this and, at the same time, get on with their production—heavier and heavier—of war materials. There were many meetings of the heads of the various allied industries throughout the country. What were the building trades prepared to do? There would be a period of readjustment, and after that, peace-time industry would be organized on a somewhat new basis. The men who would be prepared to take full advantage of this basis were those with a dash of prophecy in their make-up.

Meanwhile, the manufacture of armor-plate was a highly specialized process. The plate had to be sufficiently soft in the untreated condition to admit of machining, and hard enough—after treatment—to withstand perforation, and tough, to prevent serious cracking. Martin learned a good deal about the use of alloys at this time. There was a nickel-chrome combination which solved many difficulties. It might be useful later, too. What might be useful later—that was as far as his thought of the future went.

To Martin such thought was dangerous. He wasn't a financial man. He knew that about himself. He didn't care about money for its own sake, the way financial men had to. They collected money the way some people collect match covers. And he had enough faith in himself not to worry too much about what might happen to his own fortunes after the war was over. In the building industry there was much to say of the coming of famine prices, and that this country would be shipping goods overseas at such prices. And there might be a subsequent deflation—even panic. Martin had survived several panics. Talk was loose everywhere, and talk was cheap. And even though, as some German diplomat had said, Martin's adopted countrymen seemed to carry a great deal of moral baggage about with them, Martin could never get over the feeling that Americans talked a little too much. Now, during this present war—this war that was going on when he was an old man—everyone talked too much. Then, only Americans. They launched themselves on oceans of talk without sufficiently studying the weather.

That last year of the war was not, certainly at the beginning, currently labelled as the last. The orders kept right on coming in, and being filled. Even in the spring and summer, which were thrown wide for the end in sight, the work to be done was the same. Martin was making more money than he ever had made, or than he had ever expected to be making. But taxes were heavier. He didn't kick at that as much as most men did. He came from a country of tax payers. He tried to be fair according to his lights, and saw no good reason why he shouldn't contribute directly, as well as indirectly, to this government that had done so much for him. That was the way he felt about things. As for the readjustments which would come when the war was over, sufficient unto the day . . . There would be other readjustments, not because of peace, or because munitions

would be no longer in demand, but because the pressure would be released, and in the ensuing calm he would be able to take an accounting.

In the Steel Corporation, Martin was the manager of several plants. In one sense they were his plants. They operated under his name, and he had over them considerable authority. And yet he could make no important move without having the agreement of the Corporation. Much as he hated to admit it, he didn't blame Charlie Rosch for having got out when the getting was good, as he himself, at an earlier date, had got out of the Carnegie Company. Rosch didn't have to consult with anyone, or take orders from anyone. People consulted him, and—as for orders—he was on the giving end. Martin envied Rosch almost as much as he envied Martha. He himself was involved with the Morgan interests—heavily involved, as you didn't get something for nothing. And he had been so since that time, or period, immediately following his first interview in Morgan's office, during the course of which the late Thomas Fleetwood had been so fidgety.

The elder Morgan was dead. His death, and its importance to Martin, had been somewhat obscured by this pressure which would, sooner or later, be released. But Martin saw the difference it was to him—and would be. In that first interview Morgan had posed a question—"Don't you know that the day of independent steel masters is passing?" Martin had merely begged it—"I'm not a steel master, sir—" He couldn't have made that denial during the last summer of the war. If the day were passing to which the great man had referred, it had sometimes struck Martin that it took a long time to pass a given point. There had been ups and downs. Consolidations hadn't always done so well. They hadn't met the hopes of their organizers, judged even by the only measure—earning power—which these organizers recognized. But this was an up period. If Morgan

had been alive later he would have had to put his question a little differently, and asked Martin if he didn't know that the day of the individual steel master was passing—leaving independence out of it altogether.

Morgan—the elder Morgan—was one man. He stood on his own feet. He was replaced by a group of men. It was such a large group that you hardly knew who all of them were. With exceptions, you didn't know anything about them. They were anonymous ohms and amperes and units of efficiency. Martin himself was one of these inscrutable associates. It was not, for the most part, a company with whom he was sympathetic. Or perhaps sympathetic was a careless adjective to use in such connection.

30

The Armistice was celebrated twice, both before the actual event and after. This made a rising feast, with pause for rest, like certain celebrations in the old country—weddings and such—which went on for days. The thing had been expected, what with the German retreat—slow and disintegrated—and a series of negotiations which amounted to a virtual surrender. It had been expected, but, when it came, it was a surprise. On this side of the water, it had all the aspect of a triumph. Over there, it was said that in the trenches a telephone rang and a voice announced that the war was ended. The men were laid off as they might have been laid off in a factory. Wilson sent to war-torn Europe a message of goodwill. In Martin's opinion, Wilson had far too much to do with the peace terms later imposed on Europe. He preempted the activities of some practical man who was capable of understanding such matters. He idealized the situation, idealized himself as saviour, was unfitted to deal with those who were out merely for their countries

and for themselves, and who lacked the saviour obsession. Yet peace was ever Wilson's specialty.

But all that hadn't come yet—not in November—with Martin, at first over-busy to take too much note of the celebration in question, and gradually being sucked into it, as verification came, and as the sense of the mob beat down his concern with duty. He'd been at his New Jersey plant all day and driven in to New York quite late. His car had trouble getting through the city streets. People were throwing torn papers out of the windows along Broadway, and singing and shouting. People formed human chains, strange hands gripped, feet keeping step in something neither dance nor march. But he reached his office, finally. The elevators were jammed with men and women who had no ordinary business there, but were using the cars as an adventure in speed. In the office it was near to closing time. No work was being done, except by the switchboard operator, and Martin was greeted with an intimacy and an enthusiasm not part of the usual office routine.

Miss Bellows had her hat on. That rather shabby felt construction was not pulled down firm and straight, as she always wore it, but was perched precariously—as though someone had thrown it at her playfully and she had caught it on her head like a juggler. She followed Martin into the private office.

"I was wondering, Mr. Lyndendaal, if we should close up? Nothing will get done, as things are. There are messages for you—"

Martin picked up a sheaf of them from his desk. "Go ahead and close—"

"Your son was in."

"What about?"

"He wanted to see Mr. Simpson."

Simpson was the head bookkeeper.

"Did he see him?"

"Yes."

"What did Simpson do?"

"He gave him ten dollars."

"Well, that was all right."

"No, it wasn't—not according to Mr. Julian—he wanted a thousand."

Expletives flowed from Martin which carried Miss Bellows out of the room, as they always did. She objected to swearing. Martin was generally amused by this, but now he was occupied with something else. If Julian needed money so badly, why hadn't he gone to his mother? There was something odd about it—very odd. And why had he thought for one moment that Simpson would or could hand him over a thousand dollars without Martin's say-so? And what was Julian doing in New York, anyway? The boy had certainly lost no time since the war was over—and consequent danger—in getting out of uncongenial employment. Martin could hear distantly the sound of music and shouting, but music and shouting were not for him. He must call up his house and get hold of his son. He would take him to dinner and worm it out of him, what was wrong.

The butler answered. "Why, Mr. Julian isn't here, sir. We've had no word from him. Will you be home, sir? Mrs. Lyndendaal's having guests."

"No," said Martin, "I won't be home."

That was the last place Martin would be. Where Julian was didn't concern him as it might. On his way back to Pittsburgh, perhaps, which place he evidently wasn't supposed to have left, and without the thousand dollars. Let Julian stew in his own juice for a while. Martin was going to see Martha. His brain was foggy with fatigue and with this new puzzlement. Just seeing Martha cleared it and washed it clean, restored his soul, was his rod and his staff to comfort him. He had dismissed his car. He had the fancy to take the subway. He didn't mind the milling crowds. In a taxi he

would have been alone, and thinking. The process of thinking would be too difficult, the way he felt.

Perhaps he would catch Martha still at the bakery, or the shop, rather—Martha alone and sitting on the high stool in the cashier's cage working on the books. That was what he hoped. He would go there first. He didn't visit the little shop nearly as often as he wished he might. He would have liked to go there daily. Martha at her books—not the kind of books most young girls read—books with figures—long columns of them . . . She cared nothing for the things girls were supposed to care for. Why, she had consented to the purchase of some clothes only because it was good business to appear dignified and prosperous when calling on her Trade. And she wasn't eighteen yet. No one would believe that. No one would believe how young she was, who didn't know the drive and surge of youth that was in her.

In Brooklyn, the traffic had thinned a little. Walking from the subway station, Martin made his way without trouble. The quiet street, where the shop was, was almost deserted. People had gone home from work and they hadn't come out again for play. The shop was closed, but Martin had been right about the chance of finding Martha there. You could see her in the rear with the light overhead. Martin knocked. She got down off the high stool and came forward.

"I'm sorry—we're closed."

It was dark in the street and she couldn't see who it was. He spoke to her. She unlocked the door then and let him in.

"Why—Cousin Martin!"

"I thought I might find you. Have you had your supper?"

"No, I'm going home to have it now. Mother left an hour ago, so it ought to be ready."

"Come out with me, instead. We'll paint the town red. Peace has been declared—we'll celebrate. You should see New York, Martha—it's like a carnival."

There were no chairs in the place. Martin hoisted himself up a little and sat on the wooden counter.

"Oh, I couldn't do that, Cousin Martin! Mother would have a fit—she wouldn't know where I was—and if I went home to tell her—well, she'd only say I couldn't go."

"You'll have to go home anyway to change your things."

Her things needed changing if she and Martin were going to celebrate. At this moment Martha wasn't calling on her Trade, and she didn't waste her new clothes at the shop, going over the books. But it was perfectly true, what Martha had said—if she once went home, Anna would use every vestige of her authority to keep her there. It was a ridiculous situation.

"Oh, forget about changing your clothes," said Martin. "We'll send a boy around with a note. Why don't you have a telephone put in your apartment?"

"You can always think of more ways to spend money!"

"Can't you?"

"Of course I can. I need a salesman to help me, and another cook to help Mother. Now that the war's over, I suppose it will be easier to get supplies. I want this business to grow now."

Martha went back and slid the big ledger into the drawer beneath the sloping top of the high narrow desk. She locked the drawer, and made sure it was locked, and did the same with the whole caged compartment. When she returned she brought with her a pencil and paper.

"I've been thinking you need extra help," said Martin. "I'll give you a check, and then you can go ahead just as you wish."

"Oh, I don't think I'll need a check—" She got up on the counter beside him, and started writing. "I won't ask if I can go with you—I'll just say you came to get me—"

"That's calculated to make a tremendously favorable impression—"

The situation was more than ridiculous—but not so to Martha. To Martha there was nothing ridiculous about anything she decided to do. That was the kind of person she was. She would always be essentially the same kind of person, even though she had changed in small ways since Martin had first laid eyes on her. She wasn't quite so forthright. There was a speculation in her handsome eyes, as if she were aware that there were things to which even she had not been given the answer. Outwardly, the difference in her was slight. She was tall and she was awkward, and she still had that uncanny resemblance to her father, upon which all her other resemblances were superimposed. With so much about her that was Martha and no one else, she possessed a magnificence which broke all the ordinary rules of such possession. Her bright hair was gathered very simply in a roll at the back of her rather long throat, her slender feet were encased in shoes, plain and low-heeled, the lace of one of which had become untied and dangled unneatly. She was busy, and she flattered no man by caring how she might appear to him. There was a word now for everything which Martha was not, but at that time the word 'glamour' was not in general use. Then the definition given for it was of a charm affecting the eye, making objects other than what they are in reality.

The shop, being closed, was lighted only from the rear and from a street light outside. It was a dim place enough in which to pursue the literary effort upon which Martha was concentrated. Martin was not a nocturnal animal. Darkness made him nervous. He let himself down from the counter and went in search of a light switch.

"There—that's done," said Martha, folding the paper over. "I'll get my hat."

"I hope you didn't lie to your mother," Martin ventured. He would have given a good deal to see what was in the note, but he didn't like to ask.

"I never lie to her," Martha assured him.

"That's good. Do you know a boy who'll take it round?"

"Yes, there's one at the news-stand on the corner who often does errands for me—he'll—"

Traffic being light, the noise of a car stopping, with a grinding of brakes, sounded very loud. A car door slammed and then there was a knock—a regular battering ram of a knock.

"Go ahead," said Martin, "see who it is—" He found himself close to the double swinging doors that led to the kitchen. "I'll step in here, but I'll be listening—if you need help—" In each door, or section, there was a little window, cut, you might think, for the very purpose of listening.

"Wait a minute," said Martha. She went forward. The knock was repeated.

A man's voice spoke. Martin recognized the voice, though he couldn't place it.

"Let me in—please—" The voice was urgent, as though its owner's very life depended on this sanctuary.

"Who are you?" Martha called.

"I'm Julian Lyndendaal—you know, Martin Lyndendaal's son—your cousin."

Martha turned to Martin, who nodded and then stepped through into the kitchen. He had possibly never been more surprised in his whole life. He could see Martha working at the lock. Julian walked in. It was an ideal spot for Martin, both to hear and to see, without making his own presence known.

Martha was surprised, too. "What do you want?" she asked.

She had no trouble finding the light switch, knowing where it was of course, and her pressing of it made Martin, in the dark kitchen and standing a little back from the peep-holes of windows, wholly invisible.

"I want to talk to you—" Julian spoke lower now, but the

cadence of urgency was still strong. "I suppose you think I have an awful crust, coming to see you like this—"

Martin wondered if Martha would tell Julian that she thought he had, but she kept her peace. He was curious to see his son again. It was the first time in several months. The boy was looking well—hardly a boy any more—but it was plain he was terribly frightened about something.

"If you knew how much I'm counting on you—"

That was Julian being ingratiating. Martha was evidently not impressed. "I'm afraid I don't understand—"

"Of course not—you couldn't—possibly! May I sit down? It's rather a long story."

"I haven't a great deal of time," said Martha, somewhat curt. "And besides, there isn't any place to sit."

Would she get rid of him, before he had a chance to tell his story? Martin hoped not, but he wouldn't put it past her. Julian, however, had no intention of being got rid of. He swung himself lightly to the counter so lately more heavily negotiated by Martin himself.

"This is fine," he said.

Martha stood there before him waiting. "Well—go on—"

"I assure you, I've tried everyone—everything—and you're the only person in the whole world who can help me—"

"I still don't understand."

Martin was beginning to.

"Simpson," Julian breathed.

"Simpson?"

"Yes—the fellow in Father's office who signs the checks. I was in to see him to-day—I had to have a thousand dollars."

"Did he give it to you?" Martha asked the question without the slightest inflection of belief or disbelief—as if, for all she knew, Simpson might have done so, and then again he might not.

"No," said Julian, "that's it. But can you guess what he said?"

"I'm not very good at guessing."

"He said, 'If you were young Miss Christiansen, now, I'd give you the thousand without a peep, because I know the old man would say it was O.K.—but seeing as it's you, here's a ten spot, and that's all.'"

The full content of this speech of Simpson devastated Martin, waiting there in the dark kitchen, clean with the scent of cake ingredients and cake baking.

"Well?" said Martha. "I'm afraid I still don't—"

Julian cut her short. "Don't you see the point?"

"It's rather obvious. Mr. Simpson would give me a check for a thousand dollars, but he wouldn't give you one."

"Yes," said Julian, "exactly! And I have to have it."

"You mean you want me to go to him?"

"If you would—"

"You think I would?"

"Why not? Get the thousand—as if it was for yourself—no one will ever know the difference, and I'd be grateful to you forever and ever!"

Martha looked at him straight. Martin could see her sharp clear profile silhouetted against the light. "I didn't know your gratitude was worth so much."

There was nothing then for Julian to say except to assure her that it wasn't.

"But why can't you get the money from your father or your mother, or from some of your rich friends?"

"They wouldn't give it to me without knowing what I wanted it for. Even Charlie Rosch wouldn't do that."

"And you think I would?" Martha had said the same thing to Julian a moment before. It was evidently what puzzled her most. "If your mother wouldn't—" she went on.

"I didn't even ask her—I didn't want her to know anything about it—anything at all—it's such a rotten mess—"

"It must be indeed! And you haven't been to your father, either."

"I tell you, it wouldn't be any use. He might give it to me, once he knew, just to clear up the jam, but afterwards he'd throw me out on my neck, and then where would I be?"

"I'm sure I have no idea," said Martha.

"If I'd only had another week, I might have been able to get it here and there. But what happens? The war ends, just like that, and the old man gets laid off—he was given a week's notice because he'd been at the mills so long, but he gets laid off just the same, and he's going away—"

"What old man?" Martha cut in.

"Why—the old man I took the money from!"

"Oh," said Martha.

"He's a funny old codger," Julian continued, "very quiet in his tastes—his idea of a pleasant evening is to go to the library. He's been saving his pay for years and years. But somehow—perhaps it was his reading—he'd read a lot about economics and things like that—he didn't like banks. He kept his money in his room, in a little tin trunk at the foot of his bed. He boarded at the same place I did, and I happened to find out about it. It was almost too soft."

"I'm not soft," said Martha.

No, she wasn't soft. Martin had never been so aware of that in her, as he was at this moment.

"It isn't because you're soft, or give a rap about me, that I thought you might help me."

"Then what—"

"My father thinks a lot of you. And he's done a lot *for* you. Isn't that true? And don't you see, how much you'd be doing for him, keeping me out of trouble, and him from knowing about it?"

How much Julian meant to insinuate, Martin didn't know. Martha, thank Heaven, missed the entire implication. "If he thinks you're worth saving," she said—and Martin had the impression that she raised her voice just a little, so he would be sure to hear—"he'll probably save you himself."

Julian bent his handsome head. "Anyone is worth saving." He might have been praying.

"Only in the eyes of God. Your father's not God." Martha had been looking at Julian all this time, but now she turned and seemed to be looking directly at Martin. It was curious that Julian didn't notice it. "Your father has probably put up with a good deal from you, as it is. Naturally, he'll pay your thousand dollars. But after that, I wouldn't blame him if he threw you out. Why did you have to have the thousand dollars in such a hurry that you had to steal it from an old man's trunk?"

"There was someone I promised to give it to—they said they'd make trouble if I didn't."

"Nothing but trouble," said Martha, "it sounds pretty melodramatic."

"You mean, you don't believe it?" Julian asked her.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that! How soon do you have to have this money?"

"Day after to-morrow, at the latest. I can put it back in the trunk then, while the old man's at work, and he'll never know anything about it."

"I'm to cash the check, as if for myself, and give you the currency—is that it?"

"That's it."

Martha made an odd questioning gesture with both her fine hands. "In fact, no one will know anything, except you and me?"

"Right," said Julian. "It will be a secret between us two. Always."

At the word 'secret,' Julian's tone had changed—had dropped to a low, almost a whispering note—a note Martin himself would never have used to any woman, except to discuss the secrets of love. Martha, in her virginity, could never have heard that particular modulation, stressed for certain emphasis, and soft never to disturb the stillness of the night,

and having heard it now, the virginity would be forever marred. She blushed, Martin saw. She had never blushed for him, but he had done nothing to make her blush. Julian, without compunction, and for his own ends, was deliberately engaging her, using arts, which he must have had ample opportunity for acquiring, to tempt her to the performance of evil. And if the inveiglement were not pointed at acts usually associated with enticement, that didn't alter the facts. She had never been spoken to in such a way before, and the rising color in her face gave notice she knew it. But, however she was affected—and Martin couldn't tell about this—it didn't change the logic of her thinking.

"You have already given the money to this second person?"

"Yes—that's what I took it for!"

"And what had you done to them, that they could make so much trouble for you, if you didn't?"

"I'm afraid I couldn't tell you that. I've told you more than I meant to, as it is."

It was undoubtedly some woman, Martin could have enlightened Martha. The woman would know who Julian was, and the thousand she had already milked from him would be merely a starter. But this could be arranged.

"You'll go to Simpson?" Julian breathed.

"No, I'll go to your father. He'll give me the money for you, I'm quite sure."

Julian nearly fell off the counter. "No—you mustn't—that's the one thing you mustn't do—go to him!"

"Very well," said Martha, "we'll forget about the whole transaction." From her manner it was plain she was waiting for Julian to leave. He had taken her time unduly.

But he wasn't ready to leave. "What would you tell him?"

"He'll know everything you've told me."

"He'll throw me out—he'll pay up, and then he'll throw me out—"

"I'm not so sure. I have an idea in connection with that."

"What idea?"

"You'll hear it, all in good time. Well, take it or leave it. You'll get your money. That's the main thing, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Julian, "I suppose so. But I could have gone to my father myself, if I'd wanted to—if I'd wanted to tell him—"

"I'll attend to it."

"You think you can fix it?"

"I think so. Meet me here to-morrow night"—Martha consulted her watch as though she were making the most routine appointment—"at about seven-thirty? It's seven-thirty now. That will give you a chance to get your train for Pittsburgh and clear up your obligations the following day."

"All day to-morrow, I'll be worrying."

"It won't hurt you—to worry a little. You can phone me here in the afternoon if you want to."

"I'll do anything you say. I can't put it, how grateful I am."

"Don't forget."

"I'll phone—I'll be here—"

"I mean, don't forget that you'll do anything I say."

"You know I will!" Having shifted his burden, he was suddenly more like himself. He slid down from the counter. "Nice place you have here."

"It's nothing remarkable." Martha put out her hand. "Good night. You'll have to excuse me now, I'm going out to dinner."

"I'm afraid I've taken a lot of your time."

"That's quite all right. Oh, by the way, around the corner in the next block there's an apartment house—number 86—you'll find a letter box with the name Christiansen. Just slide this note in the slit at the top—not all the way in—just so it sticks—and ring the bell three times. Then leave. That's all."

"It'll be a pleasure—" He took the note.

He hesitated at the door which Martha held open for him.

When he stepped out, finally, she shut and locked it. He made a good deal of noise, starting his car.

As the car slid off down the street, Martin came out of the kitchen. It wasn't minutes he had been so incarcerated, but years. During that period, short or long, a scene had been enacted in which he had had no part—no more than if it had taken place upon a stage. One actor happened to be his son, the other that unpredictable young woman who was the child of his cousin. The lines given them had been written by a stranger. It was rather a cheap and sordid scene, and unlikely, too. A young man turned thief, too cowardly to make a clean breast of it before his rightful judges, asking for aid in a quarter where he thought he could get it, for reasons which he had no real grounds for imagining. But Julian would make use of any reasons he could gather, throwing it up to Martha, how much Martin had done for her, taking the worst for granted. It was why Martin had remained in his hiding place. Julian's most leering suspicions would have been confirmed if he had not.

"I suppose you know," he told Martha, "that Julian is likely to read that note of yours before he delivers it?"

"Oh, there is nothing in it for him to read! It is in Danish."

"My name—"

"Not even that. It looks as if I'd have to take you up on that check you offered me."

"I didn't say I'd give you a check to give to Julian."

"I shan't give it to him—I'll make him work for it."

"Julian won't work."

"He did, for the past year or more, to save himself from having to fight. Well, now he's saving himself from something else."

"He'll have to agree—"

"I'm doing the agreeing now. Don't you remember, I told you I needed a salesman?"

"Julian can't sell."

"Oh, yes he can! Look how he sold me on the idea of helping him out of the mess he's in."

"I don't want to see you involved with Julian in any way," said Martin. "He isn't worth it."

"I could see he wasn't worth very much."

"And this woman—"

"What woman?"

"It was a woman he stole the money for. She's probably blackmailed him. She'll do it again. The whole business is something you shouldn't be mixed up in. You see, Martha, you don't know anything about such things."

"I know I don't," said Martha. "That's just the trouble with me. Now's my chance to learn."

Martin had it in his mind to tell her that there were many things a girl like herself was as well off not learning, but any argument he chose, he must choose not for its truth but for its chance of success. Possibly the best argument of all would be Julian in person, being his own lazy and unreliable self, failing in the work Martha would give him to do, being a liability to her precious cake business instead of an asset. Yes, the young man would lose his own case.

"All right," said Martin. "Julian's going to telephone you to-morrow afternoon. I'll be at my office at five o'clock. You and he come there. I'll have the money for him, and a sort of contract for him to sign, stating he'll work for you at fifty dollars a week for twenty weeks, until the money's paid up—that's fair enough, though it's more than he'd normally be making. And meanwhile I'll check up on his story. We won't go ahead unless it's reasonably true."

"You have means of finding out?"

"Plenty of means."

"Julian won't like that."

"Which is too damned bad! And then, to-morrow night, I'll send a man to Pittsburgh with him, to see that he uses the money in the way he's supposed to use it—"

"You mean, put it back in the old man's trunk?"

"Or whatever."

"You don't trust Julian, do you?"

"Not a dime's worth!"

"No, I don't seem to be hiring him on your recommendation, exactly."

"You're hiring him because you want to learn about the seamy side of life."

"I certainly wouldn't learn that from going out to dinner with you, would I?"

"No, probably not."

Martin had almost forgotten about dinner, and celebrating. The celebration now in progress was of another sort. He crossed to the corner of the shop where he'd noticed the telephone, and got Long Distance, and Pittsburgh, and a man there who was accustomed to handling the type of negotiation he had in view. If anyone thought he was going to let Martha hand over a thousand dollars—just on Julian's say-so . . .

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Julian had been speaking the truth—that was the strange thing about it. Well, Martin was glad he hadn't gone to Rosch with his truth. It might have suited Rosch to have helped him, and said nothing, thinking it amusing to have so assisted the son of Martin Lyndendaal. It would have been as if Martin couldn't take care of his own. Rosch had given Julian enough help already, Martin felt. But he was out of it now. Possibly Martha could make something of the boy. Frances had failed. And Martin was honest enough to admit that he himself had never really tried. It would have taken more time than he'd ever had to give. Frances's failure was a thing he'd never understood. She wasn't a fool. But she'd

probably have a fit when she found out what type of work Julian had been assigned to—Young Man with a car wanted, to sell to the Trade—experience unnecessary. Julian might be reasonably successful with the old maids who ran tea rooms. He could turn on charm as you turned on water from a faucet. All this presupposed that Julian would agree to work and, if he did, would carry out his agreement. But, as Martha had said, she was doing the agreeing now.

All that day at the mills, in the midst of the confusion incidental to the changes that the end of the war were already beginning to set in motion, Martin thought of these things. He thought of them even before he received verification of Julian's story. Everything was true, including the part the details of which Julian hadn't seen fit to supply. Martin had been right about the woman. Very much of a woman, evidently. The name she went by was Rosie Hand, which was easier to pronounce and to remember than the name she had brought from Hungary.

Zari Hanajos had been born on the other side and had come here with her emigrant parents. Her father was dead. Her mother could not now be traced. She was hardly the sort, however, who needed parental protection. She'd made out pretty well for herself since she'd got her growth—which would have been at about thirteen. She was still young—twenty-two, possibly. She had no case against Julian—none that would stand in any court—but she'd got her money, or rather the old man's money, and it would be wise to let her keep it.

Martin walked into his New York office promptly at five o'clock, and found Martha and Julian waiting in the reception foyer. He took them inside. They all sat down. Martha was looking very well. She was wearing her new good clothes, and there was about her an air of authority, as befitted a young woman who was in business for herself, and on the brink of expanding that business by the addition of a salesforce. Julian

was in better shape than he'd been on the previous evening, but you could see he wasn't sure that his worries were entirely over. Martin looked from one to the other of them, and kept them waiting a moment before he opened the conversation.

"Well, Julian, you seem to have got yourself into some rather serious trouble. Martha's told me—"

"The whole thing?" Julian cut in.

"She didn't know the whole thing. I learned the rest of it direct from Pittsburgh."

"You had no right to pry into my affairs!"

Martha admonished him—"That's no way to talk to someone whom you're counting on to help you!" And then, to Martin—"Was there much more than—than what I told you?"

Miss Bellows entered, carrying a document. "Here's that contract, Mr. Lyndendaal—" She laid the paper on Martin's desk and went out.

Martin picked it up, and seemed to be so occupied with its perusal that he didn't answer Martha's question. When he did speak, it was to comment on the contents before him: "Fifty dollars a week is rather high for the kind of work he's going to do—that's usually arranged on a commission basis—but there's no use in dragging out the agony."

"It's your money, not mine," said Martha.

Martin handed the paper to Julian. "Now if you'll just sign it there—where the cross is—"

"Wait a minute—" Julian protested, "I can't promise to pay this back in twenty weeks—"

"If you'll read it," said Martha, "you'll see—"

"We've set, that very generous value on your services," Martin explained.

Julian wasn't listening. He was reading the paper which set forth these mysteries. He looked up. "Why—I can't bake cakes!"

Martha smiled at him a little frostily. "I never imagined you could. I want you to sell them."

"You mean, from door to door—or behind a counter?"

"Neither, exactly. Go and call on grocery stores and restaurants—hotels—clubs—places like that. I'm not too good at it myself, and I think you'll be better. Besides," she went on implacably, "it's the only basis on which you'll get your money—that is, get it now, when you need it—when you have to have it."

"My God," said Julian, and picked a pen from the automatic inkwell on his father's desk and signed the paper.

"It won't be so bad," Martha encouraged him. "In fact, I think you'll like the work, once you get the hang of it. And I somehow have a feeling it'll just suit you."

Martin had taken a roll of bills out of his pocket. Twenty ten dollar bills, he counted, and forty fives—and the rest in fifties. It was one of those rolls vulgarly described as being big enough to choke a horse. You would wonder, looking at it, how he had been able to carry it concealed in any pocket. "There you are," he addressed his son.

Julian's eagerness to have possession of the money was lightly masked. His relief at having it actually in hand was as plain as the sun coming out from behind a cloud. It didn't matter to him now, what he had signed, or what the plans for his future might be.

"You never know what you're getting into, do you?" he said. He was very amicable, suddenly.

"I think you ought to know," said Martha, "if you can."

"Why, that woman—that was nothing—that was just incidental. For a long time I tried to get out of paying her anything. I don't even know at all that the child is mine."

"What child?" Martha asked.

Martin tried to shut Julian up, but he was too late.

"Why—the child she's going to have—she claims it's mine—the money is for that."

"Oh," said Martha.

Martin wondered if Julian noticed a peculiar quality in Martha's voice, and in her face an utter blankness—as if he'd been talking in a foreign language, or about some matter abstrusely beyond the lay comprehension. There was a horror there, too—a horror having nothing in it of shocked propriety, but the sort of high horror one must reserve for the impenetrable. Martha Christiansen was not yet eighteen but looked more. She had graduated from a good school, she had organized a business, she was exceptionally clever. She must have known something, with all this, of how children came into the world. That was one thing. The implications surrounding that to which Julian had confessed so casually were another. Martha didn't know anything about such things. But she had admitted this to be the trouble with her, and that knowing Julian would be her chance to learn. The learning would arrive with a little more impact than she had anticipated.

Nineteen-eighteen must have been the age of innocence, Martin thought now, remembering—with such vividness—Martha's face, from which all the authority had been swept clean. She had been aware that there was a side of life of which she knew but little. She had not been aware, how little. The realization was too much. Was it to escape such, that girls of the present day made themselves so at home among the more dimly lit avenues of human experience?

It had never occurred to Martin that Julian would pursue the tale of his misfortunes to the bitter end. If it had, he would have warned him. And Martha was Julian's employer. She had made a bargain about that with Martin. She had promised Martin to make Julian work. Martin should never have been party to any such bargain.

"I'm sorry," Julian said to Martha, "I thought Father had told you."

"I saw no need to tell her," Martin said. "Martha is not

the kind of young lady with whom one discusses such matters." Julian might as well get that straight, first as last.

"I apologize."

Martin knew, which Martha fortunately didn't, that he was apologizing for something more than his own blundering statement.

The young man turned again to his new-found cousin: "If there are things you don't understand, I can tell you, you've got nothing on me! I took a lot of things for granted."

"I think you've said enough," Martin told him.

Martha said nothing. She sat there, rather stiffly. Her silence was so marked and so prolonged that both men finally joined her in that silence, as you might join a person in anything they might be doing. Martin had the uneasy sense that the shock of Julian's disclosure might have struck her dumb, after that single ejaculated "Oh." So, when she did elect to speak, any sound issuing from her lips would have an unexpected quality. What she said, had, in that direction, added virtues:

"Will you be able to start working for me next Monday?"

"Start working next *Monday*?" It was as if Julian had only happened to emphasize the day of the week.

"Well, when can you start? That will give you time to go to Pittsburgh and come back."

"Oh, Monday'll be all right, I guess. You'll have to show me what to do."

"Naturally. It's too bad you've seen the shop."

"Why?"

"It may have given you a wrong impression. I expect to have a regular baking plant, with traveling ovens and everything up-to-date."

"A traveling oven? You mean the kind of thing you buy in sporting goods stores to take camping?"

"No," said Martha, "the ovens I have in view would hardly do for camping. Of course I realize that all these improve-

ments can't be installed overnight. I'm speaking of the future."

"Yes, of course," said Martin.

"Of course," said Julian.

The future was something Martha knew about, however little she might know about the past, or about a child doubtfully fathered. Martin was glad she knew, because such knowledge would restore her faith, bring back her sense of being a superior creature. Her lately discovered ignorance had dealt a blow at this sense, left there a bruise she must rub with a healing balm. She had been dislodged from the pedestal she usually occupied, and was now returned to it. She was on one pedestal, Martin on another. Down between them was this son of Martin's.

"Why, in a place such as I hope to have," explained Martha, "more cakes can be made in one baking than could come from my present kitchen in a month! The dough is mixed, a thousand pounds at a mixing, and, when it's stirred enough, it drops automatically into a trough—it's shaped and cut, all by machinery—"

"And what will your mother be doing in the midst of the machinery?" Martin interrupted.

"Nothing. But she'll get her percentage."

"She should," said Martin. "It was her idea in the first place."

Martha was bent on showing her new salesman what kind of organization he had been given the privilege of entering. "When I'm twenty-one I shall be able to incorporate. Till then I can't. But perhaps it's just as well. It gives me three years, and a little more, in which to lay a solid groundwork. And that's important."

"You're eighteen now?" Julian asked.

"Not quite."

If Julian was surprised, he didn't show it. Martin suspected he had plumbed a depth beneath surprise. But most young

men had a taste for the unexpected adventure, particularly when they didn't have to bestir themselves too much in order to get it. In this case, it was Martha who was doing the bestirring. She rose. The new good suit she was wearing had pockets at the hips. She thrust her long hands deep in these.

"What train are you taking?" she asked Julian.

"Eight o'clock," said Martin. "I've made all arrangements. There's a man going with him."

Julian turned. "A man going with me? What for?"

"Just to make sure there's no slip-up. It's for your own protection." This was true enough. Martin figured that if Rosie Hand had any notion that Julian was showing up with a thousand dollars, the money would never reach the hiding place for which it was destined.

"All right," said Julian. He had risen, too.

Martha looked at her watch. "I think we have time."

"For what?" Julian asked.

"I should like to show you the orders already on our books. I shall expect you to bring in a lot of new ones, beginning Monday." This was to Julian. "Thanks—thanks for everything—" This to Martin, who wasn't at all clear what she was thanking him for, or if he deserved thanks.

As Martha crossed to the door, with Julian following meekly, attached to her by a leash which merely happened to be invisible, Martin should have felt a great surge of relief that the problem of Julian was now in such capable hands. He knew he should have felt so. But, instead, he felt as though Julian, being hungry, he—Martin—were appeasing that hunger with Martha, fed to him bit by bit, her strength, her high fine arrogance, her innocence. It was a sacrifice which Julian distinctly wasn't worth. There were many things that Martha didn't understand—Julian's peculiar necessity for being led not to be numbered among them—but that was as it should be, and as it should remain. It wouldn't remain. There was a door opened, and Martha

had walked through it. God alone knew what she would find on the other side.

Thinking back, Martin was quite sure that, at this time, he had no notion what the future held. If he'd had the faintest idea that those two, who had gone forth together, would ever be married to each other, he would have stopped their alliance—both present and future—by any means at his command. But how could he have known such a thing? Or other things? Such as that the time would come when he would be himself, in some regards, in favor of such a union? What he was afraid of were the vague, latent and somewhat figurative dangers listed above. These stopped him. They presented no surface firm enough for his grasp. Besides, his work wasn't done. He had something to face which might as well be faced now. The longer he put it off, the harder it would be. It might cause serious trouble if Frances wasn't told at once the arrangements that had been so recently completed for her favorite child.

He picked up the instrument which connected him directly with Miss Bellows: "Call my house and make it perfectly clear that I'm coming home to dinner, and shall expect to find Mrs. Lyndendaal and my daughters. My daughters, if they're free. Mrs. Lyndendaal in any case. Oh, yes—and Mrs. Calverton if she feels up to it. No one else—no one. It's important. If Mrs. Lyndendaal wishes to speak to me, I've gone out. But you will know how to handle it—"

He sat for about ten minutes in a sort of vacuum before the connecting link with Miss Bellows made its presence known: "It's all arranged, Mr. Lyndendaal. They're expecting you."

It was as simple as that.

"Thank you. I suppose you're going home now. . . . Oh, that's fine if you're in no hurry. I'd like you to take a letter."

The letter was to Charlie Rosch, thanking him for his interest in Julian and telling him that the young man was going

to work for a baking company—selling. “If you hear anything about him at the mills, don’t believe all you hear. His affairs there are being taken care of. When you get a breathing spell, come in and see me.”

Miss Bellows typed the letter and Martin signed it. It was half-past six. Everyone else had gone. Quiet possessed the place. It was not for Martin a quiet to foretell peace, though the peace of the world had come. He crossed to the windows and looked out. You could see a long distance—a great deal longer than the distance to his house, which seemed, suddenly, much too near. That was the same house he was living in now. It hadn’t changed much since the time of the Armistice.

This room, for instance—he tried to remember what was on that wall there before he’d bought the Rembrandt—possibly only the wood paneling, or another set of shelves, or a hanging. Save for the absence of the picture, this room had been much the same. In fact, he could recall no major difference, except that he himself had occupied it less. It had awaited his occupancy very patiently. It was almost as if the room had known the time would come when he would be sitting in it all day, every day, and it could afford to wait. The great fine empty library in a rich man’s house—what a waste of space and air and sunlight it was, when there were dark little holes in the slums housing whole families, unventilated cubicles where sleeping and cooking and mating and quarreling were all confined, where beds were slept in by six people—two at a shift—hot beds, they called these in the steel towns. Nothing like that here. Vistas . . . And downstairs, the spacious hall, and the music room, and beyond that the dining room. To the left of the hall was a little room which had been used for a sort of reception room. What was it used for now? Martin didn’t know. He must ask. He liked to keep track of his house. It was part of his life.

The present generation couldn’t understand that, or see

the advantage. They moved from place to place, shedding their associations without a single look back.

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The door of the reception room was graciously ajar. Voices—Sarah's voice. Sarah's opinion of Julian had never been high. She wouldn't mind his selling cakes. But Martin would have to wait to tell her about it, as she now seemed to be entertaining one of her numerous admirers. Well, at least he could hurry the man's departure.

The room was soft beneath lamp light, and a fire burned brightly in the little ornamental grate. A low table was set for tea. The tea was over, but there was still whiskey on a tray, and soda and ice. Martin thought a drink might be a good thing. He made himself one. Sarah's visitor was very polite, though it was clear enough that Martin's entrance had cut off some matter to be pieced together again at some later period. Sarah didn't mind—in fact, she was rather relieved and gay about it. Whether the visitor minded was immaterial. Martin didn't even remember now what he had looked like. He had impressed him as little as that. When he left—as had been counted on—Martin asked Sarah what he had wanted.

Sarah shrugged. "What does any man want?"

"I see. You shouldn't be so charming."

There was no question that Sarah was charming. She was not as perfect as her mother was, but she was not an image. Nor was she as indomitable as Martha. But she knew all the things Martha didn't know, and the knowledge had implanted in her a certain weariness upon which her gaiety sat oddly. One could not be sure whether the gaiety was a defense against boredom or against sorrow. Or merely the emergence of a youthful merriment, which had been held back until its

present showing had a touch in it of greed. For charm, she was swathed in yards and yards of a gray gauzy fabric which clung and floated. From the color she might almost have been a widow. Her widowhood was relieved by a scarlet belt and scarlet slippers. It seemed strange to Martin that this woman should be his child.

"I shall be as charming as I can, always," she answered.

"Then don't kick if the charm works! Are you going to be home to dinner?"

"No, I'm dining out—it's too bad. You're here so seldom, and I did want to see you—and I've barely time to dress."

No time, worse luck, to tell her about Julian. But she'd hear it soon enough. They came out into the hall together and waited for the elevator, which was on its way down. Fanny proved to be the passenger.

"Oh, hello, Father, how are you? I had a cable from Hazzard—he'll be back in two weeks—isn't that wonderful?—two weeks! Are you home for the evening? Sorry, I won't be. I'm late at the Canteen now—say, Louis, get me a taxi, will you?" This last, to the man whose duty it was to watch the door—that great carved door, guiltless of bronze, because Frances didn't like bronze. "Isn't that a flossy outfit, Sarah? Is that the tea gown Therese made you? I never have time to wear things like that." The door stood open for a moment and the servant on the steps. His shrill whistle had brought results—"Oh, here it is—bye bye—" Fanny was off. One felt, seeing her, that the milk of human kindness was flowing very free.

"A nice girl," said Martin, looking after her.

"Isn't she?" said Sarah. "She's made quite a success of that Canteen of hers. She works awfully hard at it. I don't suppose she'll be able to so much after Hazzard gets back, but now that the war's over, I doubt if she'll carry it on—indefinitely."

Sarah and Martin rode up in the elevator together. He went with her to the floor she shared with Fanny, then pressed the button for his own floor. Eric had everything ready for him. He bathed and shaved and was in the drawing room five minutes before the dinner hour. As he entered, Frances rose to greet him. This house of Martin's was so big you never had to see anyone in it unless you wished to, or happened to come upon them as you might in the street, or in a hotel lobby. He could have knocked at Frances's door, but he preferred to see her so, in the presence of the butler, bringing cocktails. There would be plenty of time to tell her what Julian was doing, and what he—Martin—had done. After all, Frances was his wife. She would, if requested, suit her convenience to his own, and stay in one place long enough to be spoken to.

"Is your mother coming down?"

"I think so."

They discussed Mrs. Calverton's health, and her age, and her new wheel chair, and what a wonderful woman she was. Her mind was as good as anyone's. They mentioned Fanny, and how fine it was for her that her husband was coming back. And, on their way to dinner, they spoke of Sarah, and how glad they were that she seemed to be enjoying life once more, and of the infant Sylvia, who was a funny dark haired little thing, and not as delicate as they had at first feared. Martin brought up the matter of his business affairs, and said it was yet too soon to say what the result of the peace would be, or how business generally would be affected.

"It's very pleasant here," he said. It was unexpectedly pleasant. He could easily have forgotten what he had to say. But Frances, from his message of the afternoon, must have known he had to say something. She made no sign.

"You should be here oftener," Mrs. Calverton commented.

"I know," said Martin.

"Martin is a very busy man, Mother. The demands on him are tremendous. You've no idea—"

It was from Mrs. Calverton that first mention of Julian came: "How is our son and heir?"

"He seemed all right this afternoon," Martin announced.

"You mean, you saw him?" Frances asked.

"Yes, he was in my office."

"I thought he was still in Pittsburgh." Frances spoke calmly, as she would speak, being surprised.

"He's on his way back there now."

"Did he stay in town long?" Frances asked. "Strange, he hasn't been here."

"I fancy he didn't especially want to come here."

"Pleasant as the place is!" Mrs. Calverton put in. "What did he come to your office for—money?"

"That, too," Martin answered her. "I gave him a thousand dollars."

"Have you gone mad?" said Frances. "Julian can't be trusted with a thousand dollars!" She wouldn't have said that, except that the servants were out of the room.

"He was afraid you'd feel that way about it—which was why he didn't come to you first. I also gave him a job. You see, he's through at the mills."

"You were very generous, weren't you? What kind of a job? In your office?"

"No—selling."

"Oh—in Wall Street?" The servants were back now, but this was harmless.

"No. You needn't worry about that money," Martin went on, "he won't have it long."

"I never thought he would."

"You see, he's got to give it back to the man he—er—borrowed it from." Slight emphasis on 'borrowed.' Just enough.

"Oh," said Frances. She understood. Pain entered her

face like a light, and was extinguished there. "Now tell me about Julian's job, Martin. Selling. Let's see—real estate?"

Martin appeared to change the subject: "You've heard of my cousins, the Christiansens?"

"Of course I have! I knew Axel Christiansen—a very attractive man. He was at our wedding, don't you remember? He was very ill, wasn't he? I thought he was dead."

"He is. He has a daughter who runs a bakery in Brooklyn. Her mother makes some little cakes, called Crumple Cakes. They're delicious."

Mrs. Calverton had been watching Martin. She now turned to Frances. "You'll have to go over there and buy some."

"Yes," urged Martin, "why don't you?"

Both women looked at him, something in his tone evidently having arrested their attention. It was Mrs. Calverton who asked him what all this had to do with Julian. Martin announced then what Julian's job was.

"I hope," he said to Frances, "that you will do nothing to stop it."

The table was long. Martin was seated at one end and Frances at the other. He could have wished the actual distance less, because it added unnecessarily to that other distance, which seemed to grow and grow between them in the silence following what he had said. It was a silence faintly broken by the soft movements of the servant, who was placing before each present member of the Lyndendaal family a small moulded dessert. It was a little too sweet, Martin thought, but he ate it. They all ate it. And then Frances rose. Coffee would be served in the drawing room, as it always was. There would be no departure from the regular procedure merely because Martin had exploded a series of bombs. Destruction followed explosions—that was the course of nature—but it would not be, in this case, a visible destruction. Frances kissed her mother good night.

"Aren't you coming up for a little coffee?" Martin asked. He wanted Mrs. Calverton to come. But Frances shook her head.

"Coffee keeps Mother awake—"

"I was asking her—not you," Martin said.

Mrs. Calverton looked up. Her maid was in the doorway, ready to wheel her chair in whatever direction was commanded. "No," said Mrs. Calverton, "I think not to-night. But I shall be with you, Martin, in spirit."

"Thank you."

Martin had the thought to handle the old lady's chair himself—wheel it smoothly into the elevator, which it so completely filled, and bring it out safely to the haven of her room. But if he did that, he might have given Frances the opportunity which he felt she would be quick enough to take. Frances would be hard to find in this big house, if she didn't want to be found. And Martin didn't see himself hunting in closets, peering round balconies, knocking vainly on locked doors.

They had their coffee. Martin had never known that coffee took so long to drink, but he had learned patience through some fifty years. Then it suddenly occurred to him that he was master in his own house, and when the last coffee cup was carried out and the last sign of it cleared away, he rose and shut the door leading onto the stair landing and the other door to the little writing room, thus removing all excuse for further delay.

"Well?" he questioned.

"Well?" The calm with which Frances matched his question had a deadly quality about it. "You always wanted a son," she went on, "and now you have one."

He'd heard it from her before at some moment of crisis, that he'd always wanted a son. It was being thrown up to him again, as though he were at great fault. "I don't quite follow you—I've had one for a long time."

"But not like this. You were disappointed in Julian—always. He wasn't what you'd expected. So you did what was your duty, but no more. I did it all, and I know that I wasn't entirely successful. You knew it, too. So now—at this late date—you've taken him over—you and this woman."

"What woman?" When Martin had told Frances about Julian he had mentioned no woman. He hadn't thought it necessary. But Frances didn't mean the woman he meant.

"Why, this girl—this daughter of Axel Christiansen—who runs a bakery in Brooklyn. You said she was employing Julian—"

"Martha's not a woman—she's little more than a child—"

"A child who runs a bakery—who hires salesmen? Don't be ridiculous! Has Julian fallen in love with her?"

"Martha is not a girl whom people fall in love with." Of course that was the most ridiculous statement made to-night.

"What's the matter with her? Has she a hump on her back?"

"By no means!"

"I hardly thought so."

"But she's not pretty—not pretty at all."

"Would she have to be pretty?"

"You mean—"

"I mean, for Julian to fall in love with her. What did you think I meant?"

"Nothing—"

"Neither is Sarah—pretty. But you can't say that men don't fall in love with Sarah all over the place!"

This would have been a chance to change the subject, to steer it along a safer path, but Martin didn't take it. "Martha's not like Sarah—she's not interested in such things."

"How do you know?" said Frances. "Have you asked her?"

"Of course not!"

"I see. It's the last question you ever would ask her."

Frances knew too much. She knew more than Sarah did.

Martin, in his thought of her, had so frequently compared her to an image. She was more than that. She was an idol, an oracle, an omniscient being from whom nothing could be hidden. She stripped you bare of your inmost secrets, and remorselessly permitted you to suffer for them. Martin waited for her next words, as a condemned man might wait for the noose or the bullet.

She spoke them in her own good time: "Perhaps Julian won't be so squeamish."

"Squeamish—about what?" Instead of asking that, Martin should have stopped her, but he couldn't bring himself to stop her.

"Why, about love, Martin! Squeamish about finding out what this girl thinks of love—whether she's interested in it, or whether she isn't. Or perhaps 'squeamish' isn't the right word. Scrupulous—fastidious—tender—if you care to put it so—"

Martin didn't care to put it any way—not with all the adjectives in the dictionary to help him. But he managed to pull himself into some sort of shape. Silence was all he needed. He was vouchsafed it. He gathered to himself the strength to hurl his final bomb:

"I should think one woman would be enough for Julian to be mixed up with—at one time. This thousand dollars he stole"—the strength was pouring into him now, and his tongue lingered on the act of Julian's he had formerly glossed over—"this thousand dollars was for the woman who claims the child she's about to have is his. So you may be a grandmother soon—or you may not be—you'll never know."

For a moment Martin wasn't sure that Frances had heard what he'd been saying. There was no record of hearing in the smooth and perfect mask she turned to him, no recoiling or flinching.

"You forget," she said at last, "I'm a grandmother already."

Martin might have replied that she didn't look it. Instead,

he admitted that for the moment he had forgotten the existence of the infant Sylvia. But he returned to his main subject: "She's evidently a very undesirable type of woman."

Frances smiled. "You mean, she has no visible means of support? Like running a bakery?"

Martin squared his shoulders. "No, not even that."

"Well, we all know there are such women. And most young men run across them, sooner or later."

"You take it coolly."

"How do you expect me to take it? It would be different if she were respectable."

"Yes," said Martin, "quite different." The strength was going out of him again.

"A woman such as that can have no way of proving that her child is Julian's."

"It isn't likely that she can." This was surer ground. "But she must have some proof," Martin went on. "She isn't exactly—well, not exactly a street walker. At one time she was a waitress in a cheap lunch room—then she worked in a factory. She's what we call a Hunkie. You've seen them in the steerage, coming over. Cheap labor."

"You would know more about that than I would. A thousand dollars doesn't seem to me so very cheap. She must have risen above her class."

"Yes," said Martin, "so many people have."

"I didn't intend—"

"To remind me of my own beginnings? I know you didn't."

"I think your beginnings are vastly to your credit, Martin."

He waved that aside. It hardly seemed a time for compliments. He had come home to tell Frances certain things. Well, he had told her. He had come, also, to find out if she was going to do anything to stop the arrangements he had made. This he had not found out.

"I wish I knew what your plans were," he said.

"My plans?"

"Yes. A while ago I told you that I hoped you would do nothing to stop Julian's taking this offer—this really very generous offer. I think it will be the making of him."

Frances picked up a book which happened to lie within her reach. It was one of those books which people possess more for ornament than reading. The cover of it was made of wine-colored leather, tooled with a little gold scroll. It seemed to be illustrated with photographs or engravings, each veiled with a thin tissue its owner now lifted from the picture beneath. Martin could wait, and did wait. Suddenly, waiting became insupportable.

"Well—what are you going to do?"

"For the moment—nothing."

"And when the moment is past?"

"Really, Martin, how can I say? If Julian seems happy . . ." Frances didn't finish that. Martin saw it would be all the promise he would get from her. It was, in a way, more than he had expected. She had given him her word that, for the moment, she would do nothing. Did he want a signed agreement to assure the future?

Suddenly, she was speaking again. There was a warmth in her voice, and an intimacy, that Martin hadn't heard in a long time. Listening to it, you would never guess it to be the voice of an image or an idol or an oracle.

"Ever since Julian was born," said Frances, "I've had one aim—one important aim. To make him happy. It was why I always gave in to him—why I gave him everything he wanted—until I began to see how that wouldn't do. And then it was too late."

So many things were too late. Frances left the room rather precipitately, opening the door quickly and shutting it after her. She had spoken her mind at last to Martin, and, having done so, there must have been nothing for her but flight. She had taken with her the book of wine-colored leather—perhaps

inadvertently. Julian's happiness—that was her life. In some ways she was so clever. She had a practical and agile brain. But in other ways she was so stupid. You cannot build your life on another person's happiness. She, who knew so much, ought to have known that, Martin thought. He knew it.

Frances was dead now, and Julian might better have been dead, and Martin lived on to think of these things. It was easy to think of them now, knowing what the results had been of that which he had set in motion. It had not been so easy on that night more than twenty years ago. He felt he had been too quick about giving his consent to Martha's scheme. Why should Martha be permitted to saddle herself with Julian, who stole, who became entangled with loose women, who was indolent and insolent, and not squeamish, as Frances had pointed out? But Martin had learned one thing. When you make a decision involving action, and you have taken that action, abide by it in peace until such time as it is proved wrong. Nothing had been proved yet. It was as if he had been reading a letter impossible to decipher. He gave up trying. There were other projects crying for his attention—projects comparatively clear and plain including, as they did, only the mere penny's worth of his own entire business future.

He went into the library—this same room where he was sitting now and where so little had changed. He put on a warm and comfortable robe in place of his dinner clothes, and Eric brought him a Thermos bottle of coffee. He sat down at his desk—the desk now standing in idleness against that farther wall there—and made calculations on pads of yellow paper. There must be hundreds of those pads about the house. In one of his quantitative gestures of extravagance, he might have bought the entire supply of some struggling paper mill.

The matter which Martin was considering, was getting

out of the United States Steel Corporation. It wouldn't be so easy, but it could be done, and the time was now, when there was a confusion in men's minds, and steel seemed temporarily not in the ascendant. That night was the first of many when he didn't go to bed until the late November dawn was graying the sky.

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More than twenty years had passed since then. The room where he and Frances had crossed bright swords was unrecognizable now. Over the polished floor a carpet had been laid, or, to be exact, two carpets for the two rooms into which it had been divided—his bedroom, and a smaller bedroom for his nurse. In the little writing room much plumbing had been installed. A bed, of the type known as a hospital bed, superseded the satin-covered sofa upon which Frances had sat that evening. Plate glass and metal replaced the dappled inlays of the old table tops. Muslin, crisply laundered, veiled the windows, instead of the gauzy elaborations preferred by Frances. All this because Martin was old and ill. He would have liked it better if no such count had been taken of his infirmities. It would have been very pleasant to have that part of his house remain as it had always been. The changes were like a scar on a remembered face. But, after all, he'd had so many things he'd wanted. The few things he didn't want must be present also, to balance the weight.

As a case in point, he didn't want a nurse. Eric could have managed. Eric was better than any nurse. But Martha said Eric couldn't go out in the evening and leave him if there wasn't a man about who could move him—move Martin—well, if he fell out of bed, for instance. It wasn't the houseman's place certainly—he who washed windows and did heavy cleaning and tended the furnace—to stay there at such times,

after doing his work all day. And the same thing applied to the butler. So a nurse relieved Eric at seven o'clock each night and remained on duty till seven the next morning.

The nurse was a man named Reilly. He had a pretty easy life. He slept all the morning, and in the afternoon he usually went to the movies. At night, of course, he must keep one eye open, or one ear, rather, for Martin's slightest move. What did they think Martin was going to do? Have a spasm in the night, and die suddenly? Martin resented Reilly, who was so professionally cheerful about everything, and agreed with Martin a shade too heartily that his presence was merely a concession to the concern of Mrs. Morris Silverton, who was Sarah, and Mrs. Julian Lyndendaal, who was Martha. Reilly eased the tedium of his vigils by reading magazines of gory nature, and those paper-covered reprints now so popular—"The True Story of the Keystone Trunk Murders," "When Paris Sleeps," "The Kidnap Ring," "My Escape from the Cannibals of Malaita"—the covers of these works usually set forth some high point in the contents.

Eric didn't care for Reilly's taste in literature. Eric didn't care for Reilly. But it was convenient to have him there. It enabled Eric to take long night walks with his dog, Adolphus. Adolphus occupied a kennel and a runway in the Lyndendaal backyard—was fed special food and visited by a very superior veterinarian. He more than earned his keep by handsome stud fees, and had a string of ribbons to his credit. There was a careful armed truce between Eric and Reilly. It amused Martin to watch the two men during the few moments they passed together in the morning and at night.

But all this was in the present. This was now. And what really concerned Martin now was not the present, but the past. He must look at his life whole, and appraise it—not in terms of the tangible assets he'd managed to accumulate, or to lose—not, even, as an adventure of the spirit—but in terms

of what had been important to him, and why, and what was important in him—him himself. He often wished for a finely polished crystal ball in which he might gaze, and in whose depths he might discern the reflection of incident and view and thought which marked his being. There would be indecipherable shadows, and figures—clear enough in themselves, but isolated from any continued memory. And there would be always the eyes of the seeker. And scenes shown in which this seeker had no sentient part, but which it was given him to look at in the crystal, as it were for the first time, as he might read a footnote, or hear—years afterwards—an explanation of a circumstance hitherto unexplained. There was much Martin had forgotten, and much he had taken for granted—which was the worst forgetting.

But if Martin had possessed such a crystal ball, it might have proved recalcitrant. It might be like a bright clear page of memories—not to fill him with any shame, he was ashamed of so little—but cluttering memories that should have stepped aside and given space where it might serve a better purpose. After all, you couldn't think forever. You couldn't go back, moment by moment, over the better part of three quarters of a century. You'd be dead before this feat of recollection was half completed. You couldn't think of everything. You must appraise your acts. Even a crystal ball wouldn't do that for you.

People who repented received absolution for their sins. That was the trouble with Martin—he didn't know how to repent and he had no wish to be absolved. If he had made mistakes he was perfectly willing to pay for them. What he minded was other people's paying for them—people like Martha, and even like Julian. Mistakes were more costly than sins were. They crept up and took you unawares, sometimes clothed in the very highest motives. That afternoon when Julian had given his written promise to work out the thousand dollars—the whole sorry scheme was Martha's idea—

Martin had approved. He could never get away from that approval. In the face of misgivings, he had done nothing to stop the two of them, Martha and Julian, walking out of his office as they had. He had thought the scheme would fail—he must have thought so—and it hadn't failed. That was the trouble with it.

Martha had put Julian to work, and he had worked for some years before the rot in him had come again to the surface. If this rot had appeared sooner the damage done would have been only external. Martin felt, sometimes, in looking at Martha now, that he was looking at a woman scarred from wounds which he himself had inflicted. He had given her Julian, as you might give your dear love a present of some destructive weapon which you knew in your heart of hearts she was utterly incapable of handling. Sooner or later the catastrophe would take place. And what had Martha done in return for the gift? Martha always had her way. It was her way, evidently, to keep an old man alive by her kindness and her thought and her presence, an old man who had sinned against her far more than he would have sinned through any seduction in which he himself had been directly concerned.

The years that followed the Other War were probably the most successful years of Martin's life. Financially the most successful. The most outstanding from the point of view of the world at large. They were not the happiest—this entirely apart from his personal and private troubles, which formed a direct line right on up to the present time. It was a line not particularly interwoven with his public, or business, career, except as you could call the fortunes of CRUMPLE CAKES business, from his view.

It was strange that he wasn't happy, because any faith that he might ever have had in himself, and which had sustained him, was being justified. He met test after test. And yet it was just at this period that this very faith began to totter. He began to know himself well enough to know his own limita-

tions, and the world—his world—was growing more complicated all the time, and he himself was still a simple man. The time would come, he kept feeling, when his being such would stand in his way. He must make every possible use of the time before this happened. The thing gave him a sense of pressure. Not a second could be wasted. It was said of him that he had solved the problem of being in several places at once, which was meant, of course as a tribute. Martin mistrusted tributes. They were usually meted out by people who hoped you'd go on doing for them what you had been doing. And Martin had enough to do without this added burden—enough to do, getting out with a whole hide from the United States Steel Corporation.

He owned a good deal of stock in the company. Some of it was stock given to him in payment for his original plant, which had been his merely by courtesy for far too long. He could buy his plant back, he thought, by giving up some of his stock. He could form his own company, float a loan and buy additional plants. He had ideas about furnishing structural steel for the rehabilitation of Europe. He knew that he was not alone in these. Other men had been stewing about them for a year past. In fact, Martin had refused to consider what he would do, and the very refusal had brought a deeper layer of consideration for his use. It had been working deep in his mind, cleanly and freely, without the pull or curbing of the inaccurate surface. And now that he was ready, he could examine what this work had wrought. He found it good. Even the survivor of the Fleetwoods admitted it might be operable. Though Fleetwood couldn't understand any man's voluntary shedding of the aegis of the mighty. He said as much.

Aegis was a shield, Martin knew. The shield had grown heavy on his chest. Besides, he was strong enough to do without it—that is to say, if he had the right kind of help. Too bad Charlie Rosch was so tied up with running his own

affairs. Martin could have used Charlie Rosch, though he still didn't like him. In any case, there were several things he wanted to ask Rosch about. He wanted to talk to him, casually. He wouldn't tip his hand—not to Rosch certainly—but he might find out something to his advantage. After all, Rosch himself had got out of the big corporation. In the letter Martin had written to his old enemy, thanking him for helping Julian, he had suggested that they get together, and he was a little surprised how soon Rosch availed himself of the suggestion. His surprise was short-lived.

"It's too bad," Rosch said, "that you're tied up. There's a vacancy in my place, and damned if I know who I'm going to get to fill it." It was funny how they both had the same idea.

"What kind of a vacancy?"

"Well, last year there was over a million in it, what with bonuses and such, and I've no reason to believe there'll be any less this year, what with the plans I have."

"What happened to your last president?" Martin asked.

"Oh, he says he's tired. He's going to raise roses."

"What in hell should anyone want to raise roses for?"

"Damned if I know—"

The two went on to speak of Julian, much as they might have spoken of the weather. Yes, Martin had got him a job—in a baking company, of all places, and he seemed to be doing all right.

"That little trouble he got into at the mills—all straightened out, eh?" Trust Charlie to know about that!

"Oh, that was nothing a few dollars wouldn't fix. Some woman."

"Cherchez la femme!"

"Quite so."

They went on from that point, to talk of business—business generally, and the steel business particularly—and their respective organizations. On the whole, they were careful

what they said. Rosch repeated that it was too bad, the way Martin was fixed. If he wasn't fixed that way, he might have been able to come in with him.

"Be glad to, if I could," said Martin.

"Your Company's too big," said Rosch. "It's unwieldy. Too much Wall Street. But you always did like the Street. I remember the first day I met you, there at lunch at the old Monongahela, you were going to see your broker."

"Oh, that was a bluff," said Martin. "I didn't have any broker."

Rosch laughed. "Kids we were then, weren't we? Just bluffing irresponsible kids. Those were the days!"

"They were indeed! If I ever did want to get out of my Company," Martin put in, "have you any ideas on how to go about it? I said 'if' but you never know."

"You never do, do you?"

The two measured each other. They might have been sitting around a poker table. And then Rosch gave Martin the benefit of advice which Martin was lucky to obtain. Of course Rosch would be thinking, all the time, that he himself would profit by it. He must have been surprised, months later, when Martin's deals went through, to recognize some of his own handiwork. He must have been even more surprised when the rose grower—an extremely able steel man named Hartly Drake, abandoned his roses for the firm of Martin Lyndendaal, Incorporated. He hadn't known that Martin had a vacancy himself. That was the danger of talking so much as Rosch talked. You usually said nothing, but every now and then a word which wasn't nothing slipped through. Martin had out-smarted Rosch, just for once, and—out-smarting him—he liked him better than he used to like him. Rosch wouldn't dare to call him a squarehead any more. He wouldn't think of him as such.

Martin was not a financial man. He was always admitting that lack in himself, thus spiking the guns of his detractors.

The lack had its good points. He didn't share the complete bewilderment of financial men at the end of the war. They were uneasy. They expressed themselves as uneasy. Prices went down. There was a general discharge of workers, at the same time that those who had been drafted into the army were returning to compete for jobs. Immediate panic was looked for, and didn't come. Martin, not looking for anything, went right on carrying out his plans. When predictions were unreliable, why rely on them? This attitude alone made it possible for him to accomplish all the many separate things which he did accomplish. He must arrange his affairs in such a manner that he could have control of his own business without putting into it too much of his own money. He must find the right men for the key positions—see to it that he would be cut off neither from supplies nor from distribution—make the right kind of contracts, both here and in Europe. He must see that his family would be protected in the case of his own disaster and watch, with a deliberately fatherly eye, the expansion of CRUMPLE CAKES.

He could do this, because of Julian, and without anyone's thinking that his interest there was for any reason save to insure his son's future. It was a sound enough investment, the money he put up. Martha paid interest on his loans—and not by money orders for twenty dollars. The business was growing, though it was not a steady growth to be observed day by day. Months would go by, and then suddenly Martha would take some forward step—move, install new equipment, engage more help, and then wait to consolidate that position before again going ahead.

Julian was getting along far better than anyone could have hoped. In fact, he began to do so well that it was hinted to Martin, in various quarters, that the time might be ripe for taking him into steel. He could sell that as well as cakes, couldn't he? He was handsome, he was a gentleman, he seemed to be developing that gift, innate in all successful

salesmen, of getting along—for a short time, at least—with all sorts and conditions of people. Incidentally, his position was unique in his field. Martin happened to learn that the baking business had ordinarily no place for salesmen, as most of the selling was done by the drivers who delivered the product. The new system was Martha's idea. Julian's success was hers. She had picked him up, as it were from the gutter—brushed him off and set him down on the road to glory. She had done this. No one else had been able to. You felt she knew, always, exactly what she was doing, and in watching her you had the satisfaction of observing triumph.

It was a kind of triumph which Martin could understand. There were others which were far beyond him—even his own. Martin had become a personage, a symbol who had caught the public fancy. Sometimes he felt that he was permitted to exist merely by sufferance of such men as Tom Fleetwood, who were neither personages nor symbols. The world around him was a strange world, and such men as these controlled it, with all its works. They fed—not fattened—on the fine dust accumulating between the leaves of law books. They slept in the underground and guarded quiet of bank vaults. They walked—not as clanking giants, but with the light soft step of dancers—through labyrinthine passageways. And they were never heard nor seen nor felt, save through a vast filter of indirection. Such men as Martin were the chessmen their invisible hands moved from square to square.

"Kids we were then, weren't we?" So Rosch had spoken of the early Pittsburgh days. This was nonsense, but there was a core of truth there. Success then was a matter of pushing ahead and downing your competitor. You were strong and you were quick. There was one way to skin a cat, and you learned that way, if you could. At this later time there were a dozen ways. Then, if you didn't know a technical problem, you hired an engineer who did know it. You hired lawyers to draw up papers, and—occasionally—to get around

the law. You dealt with bankers where money was concerned, because bankers knew more about money than you did. But all this was legitimate. The final control was vested in yourself, or in your superiors, if you had them. At this later time the only thing vested in yourself was the responsibility. The canvas had grown to such proportions that no one man could see it whole. It took many pairs of eyes—microscopic, telescopic, highly specialized visions for whose correctness you could have only faith.

Before the war, there had been industrial combinations, large technical units and the Trusts. The government had fought these sporadically. A government suit to dissolve the Steel Corporation had been hanging fire for a long time. Later, the Supreme Court denied the dissolution. This denial gave impetus to a centralization of financial control called the Concentration Movement. Many apparently independent enterprises were, in fact, part of large corporate combinations. Corporations secured directorships in other corporations. It was an oligarchy of power. Within this oligarchy competition existed only beneath the surface.

Labor was troublesome for a while. There were strikes, and a panic. None of them came to much. Prosperity grew and mounted. It was said, a way had been found to insure prosperity forever. Martin couldn't possibly have told you what that way was, but he didn't have to. It wasn't Martin's particular function to explain anything. There were already millions of dollars being spent for this very purpose. Legislative manipulations, control of newspapers, the hiring of experts to write textbooks in favor of the whole centralized system—all this was already being taken care of. The great public must be made to see that the present system was their system and had their interests close to its heart. Because government control was the bogey man, and—as this country was a democracy—government itself was primarily controlled through the great public.

In thinking over these matters now, a phrase came to Martin—a defense of the capitalistic system. He had heard it quite recently from the lips of the publisher with whom he had refused to co-operate on a book. There was really just one argument to use in such defense, and that didn't need a book. The argument took the form of a comparatively simple question. What was the alternative? Some form of government dictatorship—Communism, Nazism, Fascism—use the term to suit your fancy. And were these working out so well? It had been Frances's cousin, Henry, who had once told Martin that democracy didn't exist. They'd had quite a talk about it, Martin remembered, while they were consuming corn liquor and ducks, and Frances's father lay upstairs dying. And Cousin Henry had verified through Martin the fact that there was a king in Denmark.

There was still a king there, though Cousin Henry's king and the king of the little white cross had both gone to their rewards. Christian the Tenth had come to the throne in 1912. A fine man—tall—taller than Martin was. He had a grave face, and yet he could smile, too. There was a portrait of him on his big white horse, riding over the border to *Slesvig Nord*, when that province was returned to Denmark after the war. Martin had a good deal of business abroad during these years and, once on the other side, the old country always beckoned, so he'd met the king several times.

But it wasn't the old country any more. It had become—in spite of the king or perhaps because of him—more democratic than anything to which Martin had grown accustomed. There was little poverty and little wealth. The big estates were divided up. It might be said that an equal chance was forced on every subject, what with the fine schools and the fine hospitals and the opportunities for trade and for industry. It had become a veritable architect's model of a country, a Utopia in miniature. It was so scrubbed, so shining, so bursting with good health. You were sure that the

entire population rose at the same hour and performed the same gymnastic exercises, and sat down to the same well balanced and ample breakfast. Just a little smug, it seemed, with all its progress.

Martin bought his brother Peter a fine farm. He put in improvements in Karl's farm, and was generous with his relatives farther removed. A few dollars went a long way, translated into *kroner*. He did these things, not for thanks, but to set himself right in some manner he made no attempt to analyze. His own family still resented him a little. He had no wish to buy off their resentment, but merely, for himself, wished to remove its cause. The rest of his fatherland regarded him as a native son who had gone forth to glory. They told him so, even as the old King Frederick had told him. But King Frederick belonged to the old order, caring for glory. Sometimes a kind of deadly doubt passed through Martin's mind. He took issue with the Denmark he came to know after the war. No, it wasn't the same—it wasn't the same at all. There was a quality about it like a trading post—a highly efficient trading post, functioning smoothly in order to dispose of the produce from a highly efficient farm. That was all right for a business, but a country could have such a quality only in combination with other factors. Martin kept his doubts to himself, of course. What the end would be, he didn't know yet, he didn't know now. Perhaps Denmark had paid too high for her neutrality. In the second war, Denmark still was neutral. What would the price be for that, Martin couldn't help wondering.

It was on a visit at about this time that Martin braved the inn at Odense. No one remembered him there, and he was treated with a subservience oddly at variance with his leave-taking. It gave him a curious feeling to know where unmarked doors led—and no one aware that he knew. The porter and the dancer—what an anecdote it would be to tell, enlivening a dull dinner! Dismissal under circumstances

the most disgraceful. And now a distinguished guest honors the little inn. But he never told it. Certainly not to the head of the Swedish Steel Works, who happened to be visiting Denmark, and the inn, and with whom Martin struck up a mutually advantageous acquaintance. And certainly not when he returned home, and entertained, in truly royal fashion, certain members of the royal family who were visiting the United States.

It was in London that he bought the Rembrandt. England needed money—which Martin had. He bought a steam yacht from a duke, and sailed up the harbor in it. The newspaper men had trouble finding him in the engine room. His knowledge of engine rooms he was always glad to tell. A photograph of him in overalls, not too clean, adorned the second page of most of the papers. Frances objected to this—she said it was boastful. The yacht was not quite so large as Mr. Morgan's, and white instead of black, but it served. What it served was impractical, but in a manner tangible.

If Martin had had the time to take long voyages, where the spirit listeth, in the company of those he loved—if he could have settled his affairs and retired with his gains, as so many men did at his age—this yacht of his would have given him an occupation for the rest of his life. But this would have required his attainment of an entirely new character. And besides, it was only Martha whom he loved, and how could he go off on a yacht with Martha for the rest of his life? That was a dream he didn't waste time in dreaming. The yacht was a visible sign of the ultimate success that any man might attain. It was like a throne. There could be business conferences on board. Sarah gave a dance there. It was admired alike by friend and foe. Old Lake was inveigled to its decks on one fine day. Lake had never thought to get a yacht, he said, and regretted the omission, but would hardly get one now in mere imitation of his

protégé. Tom Fleetwood admired it, at the same time thinking it an undue extravagance.

"Now if you could find a buyer, you'd have had your trip back for nothing—"

The new possession had one very definite value. It gave Martin a sense of his own personal freedom—his own motility. The great steamers were faster and more convenient, but on them you were a passenger, and had to abide by rules and schedules already drawn up. On your own ship, you and the captain made the laws. You might not use this means of escape, but it was there, waiting, like a saddled horse at the door. So the *Dannebrog*—that was what he had renamed the boat—was more to him than so much substance. It reached through to his inner consciousness as steel itself reached through, and—like steel—it had among his scattered memories the solid impact of fact.

The position he had attained in industry never seemed quite real to him. He could now honestly admit that it never seemed wholly justified. He had once been ambitious to reach the top, and he had reached it—or nearly so—and the surface there was never solid enough to suit him. The money he made never seemed real. It was like the coinage of a depreciated currency. But certain material things, which grew out of money, and out of the place which had become his, were not only real, but heavily satisfying. They stilled his weariness and quenched his thirst. The useless *Dannebrog* was one of these.

34

Martin always had trouble now in remembering present dates. Yet of the dates of the past he was as full as though he were a summary at the end of a textbook chapter. These present dates were nothing to remember, perhaps. They

would be wiped out, sooner or later, forgotten, resolved to a fine dust. It was November, his calendar said, and this same year—1939. It seemed to Martin this year would never end. The Finns and the Russians were having trouble along the Russian border. But that wasn't part of the war—that was undeclared—unofficial. The real war was official if it were nothing else. A war of nerves, it was called. That was a phrase to make people afraid. It was costing a great deal of money—just for fear.

At sea, a sort of mechanized piracy was in progress. From the air, bombs dropped here and there. There were trenches—very fine and modern, with all the conveniences, and men living in them. All the little neutral nations, including the Scandinavian, were very much occupied in trying to protect their neutrality. 'Defending their neutrality' was the term used. Martin was a little confused about the exact meaning of this term in the midst of so much danger. He knew he shouldn't have been confused. It was doubtless perfectly clear to everyone else. After all, it was not his problem.

Meanwhile, time was creeping up on him. It was closing in, as his life was closing in. The past was moving up. He was so old now, that he must seem to others as insensible to them, and to his environment, and to the things which were going on in the world outside, as though he were the Sherman statue down the street, or a marble arch beneath which the traffic passes. He was a man, old and ill, sitting here in his velvet covered chair. The velvet was wearing through a bit, he had sat so long. It was a crime to use such precious fabric in such a mundane manner. But the use would be over soon and the chair retired to its rightful honors. Up to then it must support its owner in this search for truth upon which he was so strangely launched.

The old Dutchman there, Rembrandt, had gone about it in a different manner. During the course of his life he had painted some sixty portraits of himself, of which the picture

on the opposite wall was one example. There was another in the Lake Museum, up the street a way, and several in the National Gallery in London, and in other galleries, too. Martin's was one of the few that were privately owned. It was painted, so the authorities said, in the "second period" of the artist's career, combining the powers of experience with the enthusiasms of youth. Martin wouldn't know about that. It was a likeness of a man as he might be at one time, at one moment. You see it in one long look. There it was, put down on the canvas so, and forever held. It might be the truth about Rembrandt at that one time. It couldn't be the whole truth about him. Though the whole truth might well be contained in the whole sixty portraits. There would be a collection for you! Unattainable, of course. Martin wasn't a painter. He wasn't a writer, either. Or possibly, he wasn't a thinker. Thought was memory—something more and something less—and prejudice and bias—and matters not possibly to be understood. It was quite likely that he didn't wholly understand himself. But he accepted himself, in truth or out of it, much as Rembrandt must have accepted the mirrored image he used for model. And then Rembrandt painted what he saw. His brain was in his brush-tip, in the skill of his exact firm stroke which caught and held the soul, even though he—as artist—may himself have had no traffic with the soul.

Memory could catch the soul, too. The memory of talk, and how a place looked, or a person, and the look of pride or passion or bewilderment. It was not always for Martin to think why, but merely to notice, and take it for what it might be worth. He remembered certain satisfactions of his own, like his possession of the *Dannebrog*, and certain triumphs which had nothing to do with possessions. Not least among these was his growing friendship with Anna Christiansen.

Once she had been his enemy. Once she had pronounced

what amounted to a curse upon him, predicting his untimely end, and giving him grudging permission to come to a house which was no longer hers. Anna had hated Martin—she had made no bones about it—and now she didn't hate him, making no bones about that either. From the bakery Anna had been removed by stages so imperceptible that she herself might have been hard put to it to say at just what moment she had found herself with housekeeping as a sole occupation. And after all, it was Anna who had invented the bakery. Her invention had outgrown her. She was getting old, she told Martin, and could not adapt herself to new ways.

But just turned sixty wasn't old. She came of a hardy race that thought nothing of sixty. She was a strong woman still, and she didn't have enough to do. What did it amount to, she asked Martin, to cook for Martha and herself, and keep the little apartment as it should be kept? And though she didn't say this, Martin suspected that she was lonely for Axel—very lonely. What she did say was, that she would have liked it better if Martha had been a girl to bring young people to the house. Why, there had been more life in a week back on the farm where Anna had been born than there was here in a year! Martin could well believe that.

"Children—" said Anna.

"You like children?"

"Of course I do. Martha was a child for such a little while. And now she's all I have left, and she doesn't need me any more. Any hired woman could do for her what I do. Your visits, Martin—I look forward to them."

This from Anna! He made those visits as frequent as he could. He was so busy and away so much. But every now and then Martin would find himself in Anna's neat parlor, and she would serve him coffee, accompanied by the cakes they both agreed were very much better than those Martha

was turning out in such quantity by the machines which seemed, Anna criticized, to have hands and brains of their own. It appeared to her an extension of human power which God would some day punish.

Each little cake was sugared and cooled and wrapped in wax paper, all in less time than it would take to say, "Jack Robinson." And, here and there, a man standing, who called himself a baker, idly watching his rightful work being done. And this, Martha said, was only the beginning. In the real beginning, it had not been so. Anna had done it herself then. But Anna was not a machine. That's what Martha wanted—machines—and she always got what she wanted. And Crumple Cakes—what a name to call that which everyone knew was a form of *Weinerbrod*! But Martha said, everyone did not know. *Weinerbrod* was awkward to say, and meant nothing in this country where the old tongues were so soon forgotten. That was another thing the matter with Anna. She was homesick.

She used to talk to Martin of the old country. Together, they remembered the low stone walls and the long sloping thatched roofs. And the farm sounds—the crowing of the cocks, the blundering of the cattle in their stalls and, Anna said, if she listened close enough, she could still hear the rattle of the milk pails and the whinnying of old Graat, the horse who used to take the milk wagon into town.

"All farms must be the same," Martin said. "In ours there was a white cat. At milking time every night she would come stalking out of her hiding place in the loft, her tail raised stiffly in anticipation of the feast."

"I suppose our farm wasn't a very good farm," Anna admitted. "The work was hard and the living scant."

"Neither was ours—not nearly so good as Axel's."

They rarely spoke of Axel, he having belonged wholly to the days of their enmity. But they both missed him, and it was selfish of them to miss him and wish him alive, because

it was better for him to be dead than as he was. It was from Martha that Martin heard how often Anna went to visit his grave and to put flowers at the little granite headstone. She would have liked to tend his grave herself, Martha said, and keep it green. But that was all done by the employees of the great cemetery. Everything was done for Anna, except the simple household tasks which didn't take half her energies. If she had had her way, instead of Martha's way, she would have had plenty to do. She and Martha would have had a nice little place with two or three tables, where people could be served their cakes, and perhaps coffee to go with them. So she told Martin. She and Martha could have made a living. Martin felt that Anna's forgiveness of him was, in a manner, untimely. Because she resented the expansion of the cake business, and without his money this expansion would not have been possible. She didn't know, of course, how much money it had required.

"That would have been hard, Anna," he commented on her envisioned coffee shop.

"I don't mind hard things. All this comfort—it means nothing. Light when you press a button. Heat when you twist a wheel. Water when you open a tap. And, for the rest, what is there?"

"You should invite your friends here."

"I am like Martha now—never a great hand at making friends. I pass the time of day with the people at the market and at the church—that is all. I am closer to that snow there, piling up by the window ledge."

"It's very pretty, isn't it?"

"It's pretty now. It's so white. But it soon turns gray. I brush it off before that happens."

Martin and Anna talked of many things. You could do that in Danish. It was such a flexible language. People who didn't understand it thought it sounded like German. But it was lighter than German—not so guttural—and yet

of the North. One evening Martin appeared, with his chauffeur following him up the stairs, carrying a phonograph. There were Danish records to play, old folk songs and patriotic hymns. The two expatriates received much pleasure from the hearty music. The songs were filled with honest sentiment, and sometimes a certain terse humor. There was the one about the unwilling bride who is loved by the fiddler who plays at her wedding, and who is suddenly seized by him, and abducted on horseback in the midst of the festivities.

"Den spillemand snoppod fiolen fra vaeg—" The fiddler grabbed the fiddle from the wall—

Any of Martin Lyndendaal's business connections, seeing him in that little room, in the company of a middle-aged and aproned woman, listening to a phonograph, might have doubted the stability of his firm. But they didn't see him. Martha saw him quite often.

When Martha appeared all was changed—Martha, with her smartly tailored clothes and brisk ways. She was obviously pleased that her mother and Martin had made it up between them. It was about time after all these years! And she was, as obviously, a little puzzled. There were things still that Martha didn't know. There was no reason why Martha should know one very cogent motive Martin had for coming and seeing Anna. He had in the back of his mind a solution for a problem which had been bothering him, and Anna was a necessary part of this. In fact, it largely depended on her. It was quite true, what she had said, that Martha no longer needed her care. But there was someone else who did—someone who was well deserving of care, Martin had decided, and wasn't getting it.

It seemed very definitely registered in heaven that Martin had wanted a son. Nothing had been recorded about a grandson. But Fanny had done her duty in this regard, and now—even before that—at least the likelihood of such had

been attended to. There was no proof—none that would stand in court, considering the reputation of Zari Hanajos, or Rosie Hand, if you preferred to call her so—no proof except the extraordinary resemblance of the boy to Martin himself. It wasn't Martin's fault that he existed, or Martin's sin in which he had been born. It was Julian's sin, and he should have been Julian's concern. Not that Martin had any intention of making him Julian's concern. Zari Hanajos would have a hold on Julian then which Martin wouldn't for a moment permit.

Julian was a fool to take it for granted that Zari would have stopped at the thousand dollars if she hadn't been well paid for stopping. But mere payment wasn't enough. This boy was too valuable a creature to be left to the tender mercies of such a mother. He was like those infants of Roman times—or was it Greek?—who were left on the roadside, and, if they survived, they were rescued and raised. This one had survived. He was a fine vigorous male child. And, save for the eyes, which were curiously black in the blond face, he looked so much like Martin that it was as if Martin were beginning his own life all over again. There were the same thickset shoulders and short throat, the same structural heaviness of brow and cheekbone, and there would be, you could tell, the same smile when there came anything to smile about. There was the same mouth to smile with. Anyone, seeing the child, would have noted the likeness. Martin had been at some pains to see him, the Pittsburgh detective having driven them slowly by the dirty backyard which Zari Hanajos used as park and nursery.

He looked all right to Martin. He even looked all right to the doctor who'd been sent to examine him, on some pretext or other.

"You don't see a child like that once in a thousand times," the doctor had said. "A hundred per cent perfect. Probably brought into the world by a midwife—no sanitary pre-

cautions, no proper diet—nothing. And yet he turns out a hundred per cent. The more we doctors know, the more careful we are, the better able we are to preserve weaklings. Yet some of those weaklings are valuable citizens—no doubt of that—possibly more valuable than this Hanajos kid, who's half Slavic—"

"Half Slavic—only half—are you sure?"

"Why, of course—"

"You're sure that's what you think?"

"What do you think?" It was plain enough to Martin what the doctor thought. The man went on: "We don't know that he's even half Slav. The blood of various races flows in the mother's veins. You call her a Hunkie. That is hardly a definitive term. All we can say is that she stems from the lowest peasant stock of Eastern Europe. Hybrid—as are we all, but more so in her case. A cross rarely breeds true." The doctor continued with rather an obscure dissertation concerning the Mendelian theory, and also those brought forth by a scientist named Galton. "Every ancestor contributes something—or, at least, may so contribute. There is in the woman a distinct barbaric strain—some branch of Mongol. Did you ever notice her hands?"

"I never saw her," said Martin. He realized at once that he ought not to have made such denial.

The doctor brought to it a very quick acceptance: "Of course—I forgot."

"What about her hands?" Martin asked, largely to cover his own slip.

"Handsome hands—the skin clear—the fingers long and shapely. But the palms have several well defined lines which run straight across, parallel with the fingers. The vertical lines are much less clear."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning thousands of generations of simple gestures. No subtlety—just grasping. The child's hands are far more

complicated. Not that this constitutes any proof. In fact, in the opinion of most of my colleagues, it would be hardly worth mentioning. You understand, Mr. Lyndendaal, that you have no proof of—er—”

“The boy’s paternity? No, thank God!”

The doctor gave Martin a quick sharp look. “Well—as long as you understand . . . There is, of course, a resemblance, which may be purely coincidental—”

“I suppose,” said Martin, cutting him off, “there wouldn’t be any great difficulty in adopting him?”

“I could find a boy like that a hundred homes—good homes—and as the mother is decidedly open to some suitable financial settlement—”

“I’m not talking about a hundred homes,” said Martin. “I want to adopt him myself—legally.”

“Oh—in that case—well, that would be a matter for your lawyers.”

It wasn’t too palatable, having to tell Tom Fleetwood that there was a child out near Braddock that he wanted to adopt, because Tom Fleetwood thought just what the doctor thought. But Tom was in the habit of keeping his mouth shut. All the more he thought this, as Martin had to explain to him that the child wasn’t to live with Frances and himself, and Frances knew nothing about it. After all, Tom’s wife was Frances’s sister. Tom mustn’t tell his wife, because sisters were not to be trusted in keeping things from each other. Frances would find out sooner or later, and she would think what everyone else would think, that the boy was Martin’s boy. Even Julian would think so, and must keep on thinking it.

Some cock and bull story, Martin would tell, that this was the child of a friend. True enough, as far as it went, everyone would say, and only the inference wrong. But he must tell Martha the whole thing. He had to tell her. He must have Martha’s help in making Anna take the boy. All he

could do with Anna alone was to sound her out a little on these visits he paid her, and he received the impression that she might not be too unwilling. She, too, would think the boy his, and she probably didn't regard illegitimate children too lightly, no matter how legal their adoption papers might be.

Martin saw to that. He put through the transaction in the very best manner. As far as Zari was concerned, she was to have an income which would stop, automatically, if she made any trouble, or tried to see either the boy or Julian. She relinquished every right. Martin and the doctor and Tom Fleetwood and the detective drove off with their prize in the middle of the night. Martin hadn't seen Zari even then—he'd waited in the car. The doctor had arranged a temporary harborage for the boy, who was just over three years old. He took his change of venue placidly. The trained nurse, in whose charge he was placed, found him a little backward in some ways—not, she hastened to make clear, through any lack of intelligence. But he had never had any orderly training. It made a difference.

Martin was counting on Anna—counting unduly, perhaps. And on Martha, too—also unduly. He hadn't said anything to Martha about the boy before this, because he hadn't wanted to bother her before he was sure, before he had everything arranged. Besides, as he had at one time said to Julian, Martha was not the kind of girl with whom one discusses such matters. But that was three years ago. Martha was older now. In a few months she would be twenty-one. She had great plans then, she was going to incorporate her business, and in further expansion further money from Martin would be needed. Martin didn't wish to ask favors of her at the exact moment when he was handing out money, or just afterwards, either, as though for payment. This may have been why he approached Martha about the boy a little hastily—without due consideration—he wanted to get it

settled at a time when it would have nothing to do with CRUMPLE CAKES.

And, always, there was so little time. You had to seize it when you could. Some business conference fell through, which gave Martin an unexpected hour. He called Martha and asked her to meet him for lunch. She, too, was busy, and hesitated about coming, but he made her come—"Say, at one-fifteen—you'll be in my office?"

"I'll be there."

"Good. I have much to say."

"You always have much to say, Cousin Martin."

"Do you mind?"

"Of course not!"

Such busy people, they both were, taking respite from the day's work to meet each other for lunch.

"Well, well, Martha—" Martin took her hands. He would have liked to dance with her some lively folk-measure, but, instead, he led her to a chair by his desk. "You've been much in my thoughts."

"And you in mine, Cousin Martin—"

So much thinking and so little seeing. Too little, by far. Martin never tired of seeing Martha. Just looking at her, he could be reassured she was still on earth. And yet it was never a comfortable reassurance, because there was always in him the dread that some day he would break in her presence, and tell her how he felt about her.

"Come—I'm hungry—I know a place, a sort of club—you'll like it, I'm sure."

It wasn't until they were settled in the place Martin knew—it was almost as high in the air as the Lyndendaal offices, and commanded an even closer view of the harbor and the shipping—that Martin brought forth from his pocket a little leather case. He'd been carrying it around with him for several days, against this moment. It would be easier that way, he had thought, to toss it on the table and say, "Here,"

and then Martha would say, "What's that?"—just as she did say—and he would unfasten the clasp and say, "Can't you guess?"—just as he did say.

"I can see it's a photograph," Martha answered. She picked it up. "Who is it?"

This she couldn't be expected to know, without being told.

"It's not you," she went on, "I mean, as a child. It seems too new for that. Photographs at that time were different, and the clothes were different. But it looks like you."

"In a way," said Martin, "it looks more like me than it does like Julian."

It was lucky that the covering over the face of the picture was not glass, but a transparency designed for travel, because if it had been glass Martha might have broken it, she pressed it so hard, and she might have cut her beautiful strong hand. She held it so for what seemed a long time, and then she passed Julian's son back across the table.

"Oh," she said. "I always used to wonder."

"And now you know."

"Yes, now I know."

"He's big for his age," Martin chatted. "He was only three in December." And then, as this brought no response, "Don't you think he's a fine little fellow?"

"I suppose so," said Martha.

Martin thought the photograph deserved better than that. He'd been at some trouble to get it taken, or rather, at his instigation, the nurse had. The boy had proved a difficult subject, resenting the presence of photographer and camera, which last had recorded the resentment. For the most part, he looked like Martin, but there was also a touch about him of Gordon Calverton Senior, the whole lightly glazed with a quality which was neither American nor Scandinavian. This final infusion derived from the East, from the steppes of Russia, from invasions Tataric and Magyar. But when

all was said and done, it was a fairly routine depiction of a little boy, with chubby fists and round cheeks, and feet planted solidly and wide apart on the shabby animal rug, mainstay of the photographic setting.

"I've adopted him," said Martin.

"Legally?"

"Why, of course, legally. You didn't think I'd kidnapped him, did you?"

Martha's voice was dull. "Where is he now?"

Martin named the quiet hotel where the trained nurse was installed.

"Are you going to keep him there indefinitely?"

"That's it," said Martin. "I want to make a more suitable arrangement. It's what I wanted to talk over with you."

"Why with me?" Martha's inquiry wasn't at all what Martin had hoped for. She made a second one: "Does Julian know?"

"I've said nothing to Julian. I don't intend to. I could hope that he's forgotten the entire—well—the entire incident."

Martha evidently noted Martin's search for a word. "'Incident' is as good as any other," she assured him, smiling faintly.

"But this boy's not an incident."

"No, I can see that." There was a flat tone in Martha's voice—flat as well as dull. She was either totally uninterested or trying to control herself. In this last she was succeeding remarkably well. No one at the next table would have known, as Martin knew—more and more—that something had gone very wrong. And yet she was casual—almost too casual. "The woman was a foreigner, wasn't she? Why didn't you send her back to where she came from? Taking her child with her. Wouldn't that have been simpler? As you've adopted the boy, Julian's sure to see him sooner or later, and he's bound to think things."

"He'll think the same things that everybody thinks. The likeness to me is rather fortunate, because to me it doesn't greatly matter, does it, if people think that I have an illegitimate son."

"Perhaps Mrs. Lyndendaal—"

"I shan't show the boy to my wife—not unless I have to—not for the present, anyway. Besides, Frances is a very unusual woman—she isn't like other wives."

Martha's tone was still flat. "So I've gathered." Whatever she meant by that. "But what I should like to know is where I come in—why you wanted to talk about it to me—what you expect me to do."

"I thought you might know of some reliable woman who would give the boy a good home and the very best of care—a woman with no nonsense about her—whose own child, perhaps, has grown up and no longer needs her—"

"And how should I know such a woman?"

"There would be for her a generous addition to her income."

"That would be very nice."

"Surely, Martha, you know who it is who meets all these specifications!"

Martha looked at him. Martin was shocked to see that her fine eyes were wet with tears. "There is little I wouldn't do for you, Cousin Martin, but that is asking too much of me."

"Your mother—not you—"

"I know—"

"So why is it asking too much, merely to put in a good word for the idea? Your mother might not consent—"

"She might not. If she did, I should leave."

"But why, Martha? Surely not on moral grounds! It isn't the child's fault—"

"I don't give a damn about moral grounds. Oh, I know there are step-parents who don't mind having in their house children by another woman—or another man. But that's

different—that's in the past—something which doesn't concern them." Martha leaned across the table and picked up the case, and opened it, the whole movement seemingly automatic. "But having this boy—seeing him every time I came home—being reminded—"

A deadly suspicion had been taking form in Martin's mind. Another woman—that was the phrase to bring the thing forth, full-fledged. "And when did you fall in love with Julian, Martha?"

It was odd, what was happening to Martha's face, there in the bright mid-winter sunlight. Instead of remaining pale, as it normally was, it was turning red. A brush of scarlet had been passed over the long throat and the pointed chin and the high cheek bones, and up through the high smooth slightly sloping brow. The phenomenon reminded Martin of one he had seen before. For a moment he was occupied in a search for this counterpart, and then he found it. Gordon Calverton had looked like that on the Christmas day when Martin had come to his house in regard to asking for the hand of his daughter. The emotion, only, was different. And there had been something the matter with Calverton—something physically the matter—"Have a care for your father's heart, Frances." The heart, in Martha's case, was an organ more poetically apt.

"The second time I saw him," Martha said. "You were stupid, not to know."

"Yes," Martin admitted, "I was very stupid."

"I tried to conceal it. At first, I tried to conceal it even from myself. Julian isn't at all the kind of man I would want to feel like that about. It was much better, being in love with you."

"With me?"

"Yes, terribly, for a while. But you were old and you thought I was a child, and it was just something foolish, the whole thing, but Julian . . . Why do you think I've both-

ered with him so much? Teaching him about the business and keeping him at it—”

Martin, being stupid, hadn't thought. He wasn't thinking now. You didn't think, feeling as he felt—as if he had been run over or been drinking heavily, and he never drank in the middle of the day, or as if he were standing somewhere where the foothold was insecure.

“Do you intend marrying Julian?”

“He hasn't asked me.”

“But he will?”

“I don't know. I don't even know what I'd say.”

“If he's not the kind of man you want to love, he would hardly be the kind you want to marry.”

“You don't have to explain it to me. I'm not a fool. There is not one reason why we should be happy.”

“Then why consider it?”

“What shall I do if I don't marry him?”

“Go on with your cake business.”

“Naturally! You didn't think I was going to give that up?”

“I didn't even think you were going to give Julian up.” Martin's voice was harsh.

“No, I couldn't.” Martha's voice was not harsh, but blurred and slurred—curiously foreign suddenly, as though the tongue come to her at her mother's breast had been rediscovered as her natural speech. “And see him leave me,” she went on, “and see him marry someone else, or get mixed up in things? He wouldn't be safe—he needs me.”

“Yes,” said Martin, pointing to the photograph, “look at what he got mixed up in before he had the benefit of your care!”

Martha winced. He had wanted her to wince. Thinking back, now, from the clear and simple present, he realized that this was the first time, and possibly the last, when she had aroused his anger. He was old—he had always been old

—and he had thought of her as a child. Or, if he hadn't, he had kept it to himself. He had been noble, self-sacrificing, decent, and what had Julian been except utterly worthless? Her care—that was what Julian had to have. How far had this care already gone? Martin wanted to know, but he found trouble asking, Martha still being the sort of girl with whom you couldn't discuss such matters. She herself could say anything she pleased, or do anything she pleased. She always had her way. It would be her fault, anything that might take place. Julian would be a pawn and a puppet and—for her—the very integration of manhood which she could thus form for herself. It was his weakness which held her.

"You can't watch him all the time," Martin said. "You couldn't do that, even if you were married to him. Besides, he might resent such watching. You'd be taking on yourself, with Julian, rather a large order. His mother never could handle him."

"I've done pretty well with him to date," said Martha.

She was calmer now. She was talking about her success with Julian as she might talk about any design or enterprise. But Martin had been given a glimpse of something in her, like something you might see if a window shade is pulled up by accident and pulled down again quickly. He wondered if for Julian's eyes the shade was raised or lowered. There must have been some good reason for Julian to stay, selling cakes, for more than three years. If, during this time, he had been engaged in a lawful wooing, it might have been easier for Martin to believe in that which before this he had never for a moment doubted. He realized that he knew very little about Martha. He only loved her.

He had known her so well the first day he had ever seen her, but she had changed since then—become an unusual and peculiarly arresting young woman. And she was sitting there, across the table from him, making rather vain attempts

to eat the very perfect lunch with which he had provided her, wearing clothes of a quality she could never have afforded without his assistance, telling him of her passion for a being who most certainly would never have existed save for him. She was tied to him by a thousand ties. He had taken her life. What had he done with it? He wasn't angry any more—he didn't want to hurt her—he wanted to protect her—to deliver her from evil. She might not think of it as evil, any way in which she might complete the care she desired to give Julian. Martin didn't know what she would think. Not unless she saw fit to tell him, of her own free will. He couldn't ask. But he could ask something else:

"Aren't you a little afraid of Julian?"

"Why should I be?"

"Having someone you love so much always about— isn't it a situation that might prove dangerous?"

"You mean I might get mixed up with him myself? I've thought of that, too." She paused and Martin waited. She doubtless had thought of a great many things. She went on—"If Julian started to make love to me—he never has—that's another thing I don't know about. I don't know what I'd say, or what I'd do. I suppose marrying him would be the best way out, wouldn't it?" She had to repeat her question: "Wouldn't it?"

To protect her—to deliver her from evil—to give her what she wanted, and to make her happy. She herself had said there could be no happiness in marrying Julian.

"Oh, well," she said at last, as Martin didn't answer, "I suppose that's something I shall have to decide for myself!"

"You usually do decide things for yourself, don't you?"

Yes, she always knew exactly what she wanted to do, she never came begging for approval or advice. What had come over her that she had so suddenly adopted a course outside her habit, both of mind and of action? Was Julian's weakness catching, like the measles?

"Then it doesn't make any difference to you, what I decide?"

And then words were dragged out of Martin, not of his own free will, as Martha brought words forth, but of a will formed through generations of obedience to customary laws: "Any difference to me that you should become a woman like Zari Hanajos, or like my own dear daughter?"

"I've always been that to you, haven't I, whatever I did?"

"Yes," said Martin.

"If I marry Julian," continued Martha, "it might be all right for my mother to take that child. Because, you see, I wouldn't be living at home any more, so it really wouldn't matter very much—not to me."

Martin knew then that the whole thing was as good as settled. The only one who didn't know was Julian, and he'd find out soon enough. Not about the boy, but the marriage. Julian had thrust his hand into a hat and drawn forth the shortest straw. He had spun a wheel, and the wheel had stopped at the number to match his own.

It was getting late. Most of the people having lunch at Martin's club had left. There was a spaciousness, a quiet, a sort of early afternoon dullness over everything. It was dull, and at the same time bright, because the room was still filled with the sunlight which drifted in through the windows that served it almost wholly in place of walls. The turn of the year had come and gone. There was a touch—almost a foreboding—of spring. There might again be cold and storm, but for this moment these elements had called a truce. No peace signed—merely a lull, all the more to be noted because of the season. In the harbor a whistle blew. It sounded very far away, and formed a silence in itself. Out of the silence Martin spoke, though he had no wish to speak. He felicitated Martha in terms a stupid schoolboy might have used.

"I can't tell you what a lucky fellow I think Julian is . . ."

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Why should there be this waiting? If Martha was going to marry Julian, she was going to marry him, and the sooner the better. Other people might have knowledge of how the matter was progressing. In fact, Martin was sure that other people did know. It was he, only, who knew nothing. Julian must be beginning to know. Martin lived in the same house with Julian. But it seemed a house most nicely designed for avoiding those whom you didn't want to see, and Julian was adept at such avoidance. Martin would have liked to talk with Frances on the subject—Frances was ever more available than most of his family—but Martha's being more than half the problem, he couldn't bring himself to do it. All Frances thought of in connection with the girl was that she ran a bakery—or at least that thought came most easily to the surface. Any others Frances might have were even more dangerous.

He decided to talk with Anna. But she wasn't the one, either. Martin had found that out very quickly one time when he came to see her, especially to broach the subject.

"Why did you put him to work for Martha?" Anna asked. "Selling cakes is no work for a fine gentleman such as he. What is so wrong with him, that you couldn't find him something more suitable?"

"It wasn't my doing. It was hers. She likes him."

"Martha likes anyone who can be of use to her. He makes a fine impression, so she says. If you ask me, he presumes on the impression he makes."

Martin smiled. "As long as he doesn't presume on Martha—"

"A great chance of that! You should hear the way she speaks to him sometimes, when he has neglected something that he was supposed to do! It is in a tone I could never

use to any man—it is not fitting. But he takes it meekly enough. After all, Martha is his chief, and he must know by now that the only way to get on with her is to do as she says. Martha is a strange girl. She acts always as if the only thing to count in the world is that her will be done in it.”

“Did it ever occur to you, Anna, that Martha and Julian might make a—”

“No, it never did,” Anna cut him off. “I always remember something my father said—‘Mistrust a bargain in blooded stock. There are runts in every litter.’ Oh, I have nothing against Julian myself. He’s very polite to me—too polite—always jumping up and down like a jack-in-the-box when I pass through the room—bringing me flowers at Easter and Christmas. I grant that Martha does not know many young men. But she’s young yet, and she’s getting better looking all the time.”

“I gather from what you say that Julian comes here quite often—I mean to call?”

“And why should he not? Martha asks him to come. She has much to say to him that she has no time to discuss during working hours.”

“You mean, about the cake business?”

“I fancy so.”

Thus went Martin’s talk with Anna on the subject of Julian. It was not wholly satisfying. There still remained Julian himself, and he was difficult to catch. But one morning he walked into the breakfast room at seven-thirty, instead of his usual eight, thereby delivering himself into Martin’s hands. The women of the family never appeared at any such hour—or at breakfast at all, for that matter—so father and son were alone. The servant set down a tray—added to it, seeing Julian, and left them.

“You’re looking well,” said Martin.

“I’m all right.”

“How’s your business?”

"Good."

"Do you still like it?"

"I don't know what I could do about it if I didn't."

"You're not obligated to stay, are you?"

"No, but I do."

"I've wondered about that," said Martin.

"You've nothing on me."

"Oh—the situation puzzles you, too—"

Julian was eating his grapefruit. He spoke with his mouth full. "In a way it does, and in a way it doesn't."

"That's very interesting." Martin made the error of venturing on a matter more interesting still: "How do you like Martha Christiansen?"

"I like her."

"She's a very clever girl."

"So everyone says," said Julian. He poured himself some coffee and removed the cover from a dish of scrambled eggs.

Martin returned to the financial pages of the *Times*. He realized that there was nothing to be got out of Julian, and yet he couldn't help the sense that the young man was concealing something, either of fact or of feeling. Prodding him wasn't the way to get at it. The result of this conclusion by Martin was that at the breakfast table nothing more was said. They both went out of the house together. Martin was disappointed to see Julian's car drawn up back of his own.

"I was hoping that I could drop you somewhere—"

"No, Martha's heard of a building in Long Island City she thinks she might get, and have fixed for a new plant. She wants me to take her to see it. It's why I had to have breakfast at seven-thirty. Eight's bad enough. But I need the car, anyway." He turned to Martin's chauffeur, who was standing holding open the door of Martin's car: "How do you get a chauffeur's license?"

"You wouldn't need one, sir."

"I might."

Julian had always been an excellent driver. Martin wondered why he'd never thought of that as a solution. Any solution would have been better than the vision of Martha and Julian together in that swift compact vehicle. It had such a small seat for two tall people. It would be like being in a mountain hut with a storm raging, or the cabin of a small boat on the high seas, so snug and close would two such people feel—so near to the wintry morning, and yet so protected against it.

"You could have refused to take her," Martin told his son. "Surely there are drivers—"

"Yes, and one of her new light delivery trucks—half ton jobs—very nice—it could have come off the route—" He had his keys out, and was unlocking his door. "If you're so interested in what I'm doing, why don't you ask Sarah?"

"Why Sarah?"

Julian lowered his voice for confession. "If you must know, because I got tight one night and told her all about it."

Martin stood there, hardly seeing his son turn out into the line of traffic which was still light at this hour. All his attention was for the house he was leaving, and shouldn't be leaving. An upper floor harbored Sarah. But it was too early to approach her. Martin had no idea what time his daughter waked, but it wouldn't be now—not unless she went almost wholly without sleep. In the most discreet manner possible, and with an air from which grandeur was never for a moment absent, Sarah did exactly as she pleased. It pleased her, among other things, to keep that which was usually called late hours. The people she knew kept the same. Martin could raise no objection to Sarah's way of life. After all, Sarah was a countess, and perhaps countesses couldn't be judged by the standards fitting ordinary mortals. But, at any rate, only for report of death or fire could anyone break the morning silence surrounding her.

Sarah did as she pleased—Martha did as she pleased. It was something in the air, some epidemic of freedom which the aftermath of war had brought. Even Fanny did as she pleased. It happened to please Fanny to be married to Hazard Blue, and to be touring the country with him, in a triumphal progress he was making in a musical revue which he had produced himself—"The Boys and Blue"—and in which he was, of course, the star. These younger women—what would they be doing next? No wonder Anna felt she was getting old. Only Frances remained the same, secure against change.

It seemed to Martin that he had dragged his own pride in the dust a good many times during this period of his life. Possibly he had arrived at a point where his pride didn't count for as much as some other things counted. He didn't believe he'd ever wanted to know anything as much as he wanted to know what Julian had told Sarah. But it wasn't so easy, making it urgent that Sarah should give him one of her crowded hours. There was something essentially wrong with Martin's relation to his family. He should have been able to command the presence of any one of them, at any time that suited his convenience. Instead of that, with the possible exception of Frances—who would always see him on request—he must sue for their attention. He supposed Sarah thought herself the very picture of a dutiful and devoted daughter. She broke an engagement to arrange their meeting. At six it would be, six the following day. It was probably the first engagement, looking down her list, that she didn't mind breaking. And she kept her father waiting only a few moments. Things had come to a pretty pass for Martin when, to discover his fate, he must wait in the sitting room of a countess—in a more naive age it would have been dubbed "boudoir"—a countess who happened to be his daughter.

He had time to note the extensive alterations which Sarah

had made in this part of the house which she had formerly shared with Fanny. She had done it over into a complete apartment, as though not in Martin's house at all, and done herself rather well. The nursery for Sylvia particularly took Martin's attention. All the furniture was on a small scale, the chairs, the tables, the chests, as though designed not perhaps for dolls but for midgets. Sylvia was small—such a dark little thing, much darker than Martin's second grandchild, but lacking the barbaric strain. She had such nice manners and a funny precise way of speech. When Martin came in she was just finishing her supper.

"Won't you sit down, Grandfather?" she inquired. A humorous glint came into her face. She had the same mobile quality which was one of Sarah's chief charms. It was like a marsh light, flickering and luring, and leading the traveler nowhere. "I wouldn't know, however," she went on, "exactly where you'd sit."

The nurse had risen and now offered Martin the one full-grown chair. Martin felt himself Brobdingnag—Gulliver among the Lilliputians.

Sarah's more personal quarters were on a normal scale, of course. Very simple and yet magnificent. No knickknacks, and yet an effect of luxury. The place was, primarily, a setting for Sarah. Martin was shocked at his lack of familiarity with his own possessions. He was growing to have too many possessions of all kinds—that was the trouble with him. And he seemed to keep taking on new ones. It was a policy of imperialism, attendant with responsibilities and disadvantages. And then all this was forgotten because Sarah stood in the doorway, wrapped in furs like the Czarina of all the Russias, and bubbling with apologies. Martin hadn't minded her lateness. It would keep, what he wanted of her. It had kept so long already.

Sarah shed outer garments, including the little fur toque she was wearing, and the gloves and the wrap. She set down her pocket book, and rang bells for tea and any other re-

freshment to be desired, and went into her bedroom to do "something about her face"—not that it needed doing anything about—and returned shortly, all powdered and immaculate. But she didn't give Martin any help, nor ask him of what help she might be. He had to come at that, cold.

"Julian tells me that one night he got drunk and told you all about himself and the baking business. He inferred that I might learn the story from you."

Sarah had seated herself in a low chair. As Martin was standing, it seemed as if she were sitting on the floor. He had to look down at her, and down again. She met his glance by her small oval face being thrown well back.

"And you want very much to learn it, don't you, Father?"

"Yes. I have that right. Julian is my son."

"And Martha Christiansen is your cousin. A very remarkable girl."

"So I've gathered. Do you know her?"

"After what Julian said, I made it my business to know her."

Martin swallowed that, but for the moment let it rest. "What did Julian say?"

"Only what must be obvious to the meanest intelligence. That he's mad about her—quite mad!"

"His madness doesn't seem to have—"

"Got him anything?" Sarah cut in. "I assure you, not a thing. You see, he's terribly afraid of her. And afraid, too, that if he made any advances of any sort she would throw him out on his ear. In a way he'd be glad of that, because he doesn't particularly enjoy the work he's doing, but he couldn't live without being near her. He'd be like a plant without water—that's what he said."

Martin sat down. He felt it would be safer. "What will the next step be?" Sarah might know—she knew so much.

Her answer was postponed by the arrival of refreshments. Martin mixed himself a drink, feeling the need of it.

"The next step?" Sarah spoke as soon as she was free

to do so. "He'll screw up his courage one of these days, and ask her to marry him."

"And her answer?"

"It will be, yes, of course."

"How do you know that?"

"She told me. She has nothing to conceal. She's the most magnificent creature I ever saw."

"You mean, you think she's handsome?"

"Extraordinarily so. Don't you?"

"Why, no, not exactly. I've never thought about it."

"There are fashions in beauty," Sarah explained. "Her particular fashion was not in vogue when you were young. Therefore you don't recognize it—at least you don't recognize it, as such."

"What do you mean, as such?" Martin asked this, fully realizing that he was being drawn out—led astray—seduced off the path it was safe to follow. But Sarah was highly qualified for such guidance.

"I mean, you don't say to yourself, 'It is because she is beautiful that I help her to establish the business she wishes to succeed in—it is because she is beautiful that I must know how things are between her and this son of mine, whom I don't think good enough for her.'"

"You mean, if she were not beautiful, I would not—"

"No, old dear, I don't think you would."

Martin must set Sarah straight on this. "I assure you, when I first saw Martha she was an untidy awkward school-girl, and the worst dressed—"

Sarah never would wait for her father to finish a sentence. "And that pained you terribly, didn't it? Her ugly clothes were an affront to all you cared about, you kept thinking how she would look if they were as they should be—"

It was Martin's turn to interrupt. "Oh, God—" he said. He went on—"It's just to shield her—"

"I know," said Sarah. "And she needs shielding, even if Julian is afraid of her. Because, of course, Julian's being as he is, if he weren't afraid of her, he probably wouldn't be in love with her. He's that kind."

This was a bit deep, coming from the slim girlishness curled upon the low chair. Sarah sat with her feet drawn beneath her, disregarding the safety of the light silk with which the chair was covered. Her lovely little hands, with their polished nails, clasped her knees. She had something of the oracular quality of her mother, but with more humanity. This was proved by her next comment, which was kind, because it was trivial. "She has the most ridiculous eyebrows I ever saw."

"What's wrong with them?"

"Nothing whatever. For her, they're quite perfect. And she talks well, too. Most of the girls I know talk all at once, like a flock of birds in a tree. I'm a little afraid of her myself. She's so sure of herself—and so young."

"Compared to her, Sarah, you're practically an old woman!"

"I'm nearly thirty."

She didn't look it. In fact, her looks utterly belied her experience of life. In this dim light she might have passed for twenty.

"Might I ask," Martin questioned, "how you came to know Martha? I saw her recently and she didn't mention you."

"I told her that it would be better not to—that you had troubles of your own. I knew her by the simple process of going to see her. I went to her office on Christmas, and took her for a drive in the country."

So many things seemed to happen on Christmas, Martin thought.

Sarah continued: "You were abroad at the time—one of your quick trips—and Mother was spending the holiday with

Fanny, in Chicago. Sylvia had been invited to stay with Uncle Gordon's brood out in Huntington—with her nurse, of course—so I was entirely on the loose. I had an engagement which fell through at the last minute. So I had a basket packed—I took a car—I had thoughts of finding a fisherman's hut out on Long Island—

"Was there a fisherman to go with it?"

"There might be. Some of them are very attractive. But anyway, I ended up in Brooklyn. The fact was, I got lost, so I thought this would be a good chance to look my cousin up."

"And what was she doing in her office on Christmas?"

"How should I know? But she was there—alone. We went to see her mother, because her mother was preparing Christmas dinner—a delightful woman, just like something out of a picture book—she urged us to both stay there, but, after all, I had my basket, and I wanted to see Martha by herself."

"So what did you do then—did you tour Long Island?"

"Practically. We got nearly as far as Southampton—I thought it would be fun to see the house we used to live in there. So we had a good talk."

"I don't doubt you had," said Martin.

Martin was hardly of a build to be a stowaway on such a trip—thrust into the space provided for packages. But he would have given a good deal to have been present, unbeknownst. He realized then, what he came to realize more and more as the years went on, that too many important matters were decided in good talks between women. It had not been so in the old country. It had not been so in Pittsburgh, or in any steel mill. But in personal and private dealing, it was far too true for any comfort. Women were the queen bees. Men—well, what were they but the necessary drones, drones not in the sense of idle wasters but in the sense of maleness? It was women who decided their fates,

in a few good talks. A woman-ridden age, indeed! Hag-ridden used to be the term, though this would now be a misnomer.

"And your mother," Martin asked—if the matter were in the hands of women, Frances must be included—"how does she feel about the situation?"

"I haven't the vaguest notion! I've got over the point when I let Mother do my thinking for me."

"She did it once too often," Martin ventured.

"Yes," said Sarah, "just once. I was crazy about Iggy anyway, but it was Mother who made marrying him seem such a big thing."

"Iggy?"

"Yes—the Count Ignazio Torriani Maria Gregorio da Matiabelli." Sarah pronounced the name with a peculiar gaiety, as though she had long found the sound of it to be a hollow sound, but liked the noise her feet would make if permitted to dance upon its surface. "Mother's made it up to me since—she's been very nice to me—everyone's been very nice to me. And Sylvia's such a little darling. In fact, everything is lovely. Oh, by the way, I'm asking Martha to dinner soon. When Julian sees how much attention she'll attract from the people who know enough to appreciate her, it may bring him to his senses. I do hope you can be here."

Martin would make a point of being here, he promised. But of course Sarah knew that—she didn't need his promise.

"You approve of this marriage, don't you?" Martin wanted to be sure.

"But of course! It's something little brother has to have."

"As a plant needs water," Martin murmured. Perhaps it was true, what Sarah had said, that Martha was beautiful, and it was the thing in her which stirred him, without his knowing. It was undoubtedly the thing which stirred Julian—that and being afraid of her.

If Martin had been sure then that he wanted to stop this

marriage, he might have stopped it. But he wasn't sure. It was like a sin he was committing, not stopping it. Could he commit only negative sins? Thinking about it, he didn't understand his attitude—neither then nor now. It was one of the things which remained not wholly solved. There was so much in his life of which he could form an estimate—particularly in his business life. He could see the forces working for him or against him, see them in the mass, so that he didn't have to remember the detail any more. But his personal life wasn't like that. The detail was so thick, it crowded out all else. It fell into a series of unrelated scenes, like this with Sarah. It was what Sarah said and he said, and what Julian said and what Anna said. It was seeing Martha, sitting there across the table from him in the club where he'd taken her to lunch, or at his own dinner table on the occasion of which Sarah had given him notice.

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Martin found himself oddly eager for this function. He had been due in Chicago, but when Sarah settled on a date he arranged his affairs so he wouldn't be in Chicago. And speaking of dates, this must have been the mid-winter of 1922, because Martha would be twenty-one in May. And Julian's son, having been born late in 1918, was something over three. Sarah's little girl was older—not a great deal older, less than a year. She was exceptionally bright for her age. Martin wanted to get these things straight in his own mind. They bothered him no little. All this damnable detail! It was like trees in a forest, and you didn't know how big the forest was because of them, so you had to count the trees and set them out in orderly rows before your dimming sight. And in so considering the past, you had to consider the present also, which didn't mat-

ter to you nearly so much, but it existed. You were still alive in the year 1939—November of this year, which made a lapse of nearly eighteen years between then and now. It didn't seem so long. Martin remembered that dinner party Sarah gave for Martha so vividly—more vividly than he remembered last week's news.

For him, the occasion began with a knock on his dressing room door, and Eric's admitting Frances—of all people—very grand in black velvet and diamonds. Eric had finished helping with the fastening of his studs in his stiff shirt bosom, and so could withdraw at once. Frances sat down. It was perhaps the first time that Martin noticed, beneath the skilful touch of rouge, a pallor about her which was not the pallor of her youth. But he was largely occupied with the fact of his own shirt-sleeved attire, in the face of so much grandeur. Eric had left his coat for him, neatly spread on a chair-back. Martin managed to get into it. Frances waited until the minor struggle was over.

"Had you anything to do with this dinner of Sarah's?" she asked him then.

"No—except that she made sure of my coming. I should be in Chicago."

"But as a favor to her—"

"Yes, as a favor to her—"

"I see," said Frances. What she saw, Martin made no attempt to fathom. "She's asked the most extraordinary conglomeration of people to meet this young cousin of hers, that she's taken such a fancy to!"

"Such as—"

"The Lakes, Mr. and Mrs. Rosch, Gordon and his wife—Mother is even requested to put in an appearance, though I don't think her health's at all up to it. And, for the rest, some of Sarah's very gayest cronies. What everyone will think of this girl—"

"You'd be surprised," said Martin.

"Oh, I've long ago ceased being surprised. What shall we do with such a collection after dinner?"

"Isn't that rather Sarah's problem? Too bad Fanny's husband isn't here to entertain them."

"Yes, that would be simple. He might have been able to suggest something. Too bad I didn't think to telegraph him."

"Yes, too bad."

"You understand, don't you, that the young woman is to be the guest of honor? You take her in to dinner." Frances was ever exact.

"I shall be delighted."

"I know she's done a great deal for Julian, but doesn't it strike you as rather extraordinary, on Sarah's part?"

"Why, no," Martin was saying, "I can't see that it's—"

Frances interrupted him—"What's that on your coat lapel?"

It was the little ribbon denoting his possession of the Knight's Cross of the Dannebrog Order. Eric must have placed it there. Frances had seen it before, when Martin had served in any official, or Scandinavian capacity—she had even seen him wear the cross itself—but he told her what it was.

"Why should you wear it to-night?"

"I may need it. Besides, I wouldn't want to hurt Eric's feelings."

"Mother is to sit at your right," said Frances, changing a futile subject.

"Fine—then she can have a good look at Martha."

"And why should she have need of such a look?" Frances said something then which seemed to have no bearing on the subject at hand: "I think we're altogether too lenient with Sarah—too indulgent. I know she had a bad time about her marriage, but that's no reason for treating her lightest wish as law."

There was a bearing, after all, and Martin got it. "Yes, the next time, she might decide to give a dinner in honor of the corner grocer."

Frances rose. "Your choice of words is unfortunate."

"There's very little difference," Martin said, "between a grocer and a baker. Though we mustn't forget our son—"

"Oh, I haven't forgotten him—not in the least!" She turned and left. Her gown had a train. She was gone before all the velvet was out of the room.

Instead of using the elevator, Martin made his way down the stairs. He went into the dining room and found Sarah looking over the place cards. The table—at its longest—was aglitter with crystal and linen and silver, even though the candles had not yet been lighted. The linen was not the usual damask, but a special cloth which had been procured for that dinner which the Lyndendaals had once given for visiting Royalty. It had been made in Copenhagen, and had lace inserts, and was embroidered with the three towers of that city.

"You've done yourself rather well," Martin said to Sarah.

She was in her favorite scarlet, almost the color of a cardinal's robes. Her lips matched it, and her slippers. Her hair was simply dressed, but not a single hair misplaced.

"I want everything to be nice," she answered. She had a satisfied and housekeeperly air, as though all the Lyndendaal functions depended on her personal supervision.

"Where's Julian?"

"Gone to pick up Martha."

Martin had a sudden dread. "I hope she'll have a suitable dress. I don't believe she's ever gone in much for evening things—"

"I saw to that," said Sarah.

"Would you mind telling me how? Martha wouldn't take kindly to—"

"I spoke to a woman at Bendel's, and then got her up there on some pretext or other. I assure you, she'll do you credit. You look very distinguished yourself!"

Martin didn't feel distinguished. He felt old and filled

with weariness and wishing the evening were over. He was very fond of Sarah, and proud she was his child, but he could have wished for once that she had let well enough alone. It seemed a family trait to interfere in other people's lives, to play God among mortals.

There was no doubt of the credit Martha did him. She was a little ill-at-ease, though no one would have known this who hadn't known her. She was taller than most of the women present, which gave her an advantage. She was younger, which gave her another. She was dressed very simply in white. The gown seemed artless, but was not. She looked in it—there were no words for how she looked—tall and young. A crown might have nestled in her hair, but did not. It would have added nothing and passed unnoticed. In that gathering—Frances's conglomeration of people—she was a mystery both to those who had heard of her and to those who had not. She was Miss Christiansen, Sarah's cousin.

"You speak such good English for a foreigner."

"I'm not a foreigner."

It got about, what her business was.

"I think cooking is such a delightful hobby."

"I'm sorry," said Martha, "I can't cook."

"Oh, you don't make your cakes yourself, then?"

"No, they're made by machinery, mostly—"

"Fascinating—"

"You always were a picker," said Rosch to Martin, from halfway down the table. It was the kind of thing one would know Rosch would say. There must be an answer, but not from Martin, certainly, which would make too much of it. Besides, Sarah—not Martin—had been the picker. Martin hadn't even known that the girl was beautiful. The answer came from an unexpected source.

As Frances had said, Mrs. Calverton sat at Martin's right. Her presence gave an official stamp to the occasion. She was a precious object, brought forth rarely, for purposes of

display only—dusted off and set up conspicuously where all could see. She looked as though grave wrappings had been unwound in order that she be revealed, and not too much unwound either, as black lace swathed her from the chin down, showing nothing but the small shell-like face and the hands as close-veined as the lace itself. She was waited on by her special servant, stationed constantly behind her chair, and served with different food from that which was served to others. She drank a little wine. She drank a little now, raising her glass, and in some manner attracting Rosch's attention, who was on the opposite side of the table.

"Don't you think, Mr. Rosch, that discrimination of the sort you mean is apt to be a family trait?"

Her voice was low but clear. Her toast—for such it had the air of being—included Julian, sitting at Martha's right. What was this, a betrothal feast, when there had been as yet no betrothal? These Calvertons, Martin thought, missed nothing. There was a creature in Egypt, a great bulk of stone with a woman's head and lion's feet, who knew no more. Rosch bowed to take his medicine.

Tom Fleetwood was here, and Emily, his wife. Tom already knew Martha, as certain business transactions had taken place in his office. Emily had never seen her before, and obviously didn't know quite what to make of her. And Gordon was here, whom Martin remembered so well as a little boy playing with a new rifle. Gordon was now a man of forty plus, with the looks which were also a family trait. He'd done pretty well in Wall Street, but things were not so good there for the moment. It was rumored that Gordon had lost money. Perhaps that was why he submitted so often to the refilling of his glass. For himself, he couldn't afford the prohibition price of good wine. Gordon had never seen Martha before either. He was sitting diagonally across the table from her. His dinner partner was Mrs. Lake, his other companion one of Sarah's friends. Mrs. Lake was of no in-

terest to Gordon, the other woman of no novelty. Martha was novelty in the flesh. She was the guest of honor—hitherto unknown—her star rising. Martin—sensitive to the kind of impression Martha was making—was warned of Gordon's concern well in advance of any overt act committed by his brother-in-law.

"When Julian sees how much attention she'll attract—" That was what Sarah had said, and admittedly her object in giving this rather oddly assorted entertainment. It was a vision she would bring before Julian's eyes—Martha as something other than the matter-of-fact owner of a baking business. Gordon was Sarah's uncle. You do not think of an uncle as an arouser of jealousy. But the unattached and younger men present, of whom there were several, possibly lacked the discrimination so notably a quality in the Lyndendaal-Calverton clan. Their curiosity about Martha was mild—in simple modern phrase, they made no passes at her. Uncle Gordon lost no time.

"Don't you think," he asked her, addressing her from across the reasonably wide table, "that this house is one of the most unusual examples of architecture in New York?"

"I really don't know," said Martha. "I've never been here before."

She shouldn't have admitted that, but she did. Martin suspected it of being news to Gordon.

"Then after dinner perhaps you'll let me show you the place? I'm sure my sister won't mind. There's a most remarkable ball room on the roof, and there are greenhouses, and Martin has a Rembrandt you ought not to miss."

"I should like that very much," said Martha.

You could see that Julian was pleased at Gordon's courtesy. Julian was a fool. Why should Gordon be showing Martha the house? And yet Martin didn't like to say anything. He couldn't say it was a privilege he had been reserving for himself.

Frances, at the other end of the table, missed all this. She was occupied with Lake, who sat at her right, and with Hartly Drake at her left. Drake was the former president of the Rosch Company, he whom Martin had persuaded to abandon rose-growing. Sarah shouldn't have invited Drake and Rosch together. You don't knowingly ask divorced couples to the same table. But if Rosch thought that Drake had pulled a fast one, he made no sign. It was Martin himself, really, who had done that, in persuading Drake to return to the steel business.

A conglomeration of people, Frances had called it. They divided themselves into groups. There was Lake and Rosch and Fleetwood and Drake and Martin. There was Julian and Gordon, and the unattached young men. This division became obvious in the dining room, after the women had left them. Lake wanted to discuss with Martin the labor troubles, which had been temporarily settled. He had no patience with the increasing power of the unions. Lake was growing old. He must be close to seventy, Martin was shocked to calculate. He was only a few years younger than Mrs. Calverton. But he wasn't lame. His neat beard was white now—otherwise, he was easily recognizable. He said the war had been a little too much for him. A stranger, hearing him, might have thought he referred to years of trench mud, but the men present knew what he meant. He wasn't one to rest on his laurels—grow roses—not while the stomach specialists could keep him alive.

Lake had never been a man popular with the public, but Martin had always liked him. He was the tight drawn belt and the keen sword. He died soon after this, very suddenly in the night. He had been at his desk that very day. All his affairs were found to be in the most meticulous order. He left a will which Fleetwood said was the most beautiful legal document it had ever been his pleasure to examine. So much dying there seemed to be in the world. The people coming

into it would have a task replacing those who left. Mrs. Calverton, too, didn't live long after this.

She liked Martha. She told Martin so, that very evening. They had one of their brief but salient moments together, he himself taking her chair to the elevator after the men had rejoined the women in the drawing room.

"I don't think Julian could do better—" She knew about it, also.

"Yes," said Martin, "if he gets her he'll be lucky."

"The trouble is, some people don't know how to handle luck."

Martin would have liked to pursue this subject further, but he had to return to his guests. He had too much to do that evening, too much to attend to. If he hadn't, he would have seen the moment when Gordon attained his objective of showing Martha the house. As things were, he noticed their common absence a little late. He went in search of them. In this, Julian was evidently before him, though there could have been no suspicion in Julian's mind—merely a natural wish to find Martha and be with her.

In this same room which Martin now occupied, in that end of it where the Rembrandt hung, Martin intruded upon a scene. As long as it was taking place—his intrusion whether or no—he made no sign of regretting his presence. Julian had been brought to what Sarah called his senses. Or, rather, there was a spark of manhood there for which Martin would never have given him the credit. He might be afraid of Martha, but he couldn't have been afraid of Gordon, or of knocking him down—which he'd just done as Martin entered, hearing the thud of it. Julian was for once the victorious male, rescuing his lady-love from unwelcome advances by the predatory and, as his reward, taking her in his arms and pouring words of love into her ear. Strange words of love, but—by Julian's code—love.

"I've been missing things," Julian was saying. "I didn't

know you were the kind of girl a man could get a kiss from without by your leave, or was it? You better tell me. Not that I think so, or that it would matter if it had been, because it'll be the last he'll get, or anyone will get, but me. Which goes for all the time, from now on."

All the time would be no time at all in which to kiss a woman such as Martha, and to kiss away the anger which must have mounted in her till—as Martin had come in—it made of her face an exquisite mask of woman's wrath. Such wrath possessed, Martin felt, an object not so much unworthy as insufficient. He was a little sorry for the figure on the floor, and was glad it stirred—reassurance that Julian was not a murderer, whatever else he was—and was shocked at the term the young man took a moment to apply to him in the midst of his kissing—"What did the old buzzard think he was doing?"

Gordon, in the earlier forties, was not an old buzzard. He was still a very handsome man, even seen at his present disadvantage. He had that fine-drawn look of all the Calvertons. A little shopworn, perhaps, as if he had spent too many years in the display case instead of in a more natural habitat of time. Yes, Martin had a certain sympathy for Gordon. Though he realized that he might have had less, if he himself had witnessed the impassioned and doubtless technically expert salute which was the subject of Julian's discourse.

It fell to Martin to get Gordon on his feet, and to a neighboring bathroom, and the blood stopped from his nose, and into a clean shirt of Julian's. During this ministering his sympathy froze a degree or so. Gordon apologized most profoundly. He hadn't known, he said, in fact he'd no idea, that Martha was pre-empted by Julian. What he'd thought—well, he simply wouldn't insult Martin by repeating what he'd thought—something which came of giving credence to unsupported rumors. Anyway, he was tight. People never knew when he was tight—he didn't show it, not in speech or

walk or any visible way—but alcohol had the effect on him it had on so many men—up to a certain point, at least—

“Don’t tell Frances,” said Martin.

“Oh, my God, no!”

“She wouldn’t like it.”

“Oh, my God, no!” Gordon repeated. “Or my wife—”

But his wife was probably used to Gordon’s peccadilloes, and—beyond this—wouldn’t have the same background that Frances would have for not liking it. Her husband, her son, her brother—it would make it rather hard for Frances to go on displaying towards Martha that charming courtesy which Martin had observed during the earlier course of this busy evening. It was Gordon’s wife—rather a handsome woman if you liked the athletic type—who observed immediately something which Martin had hoped would pass without comment.

“Why did you change your shirt, Gordon?”

Martin abandoned his brother-in-law to any explanation of this which he saw fit to make. The Lakes were across the room talking to the Rosches. Nice quiet people. Martin had need of them. He knew them as you would know a shoe shaped to the foot through many wearings. He was tired, and might have said so, save for the discourtesy of the admission.

37

Martha and Julian were married in the early spring, very quietly. Martin was in Europe—one of his quick trips. There was an extensive building project in Belgium, for which he was supplying the steel. If he had known in time, he would have returned, but the cable came two days before the event. He had known they were to be married—everyone knew that by now—but the pushing forward of the date was unexpected. Martin learned afterwards that Martha did not

care to be married from someone else's house, and the Christiansen apartment was hardly adequate for a Lyndendaal wedding. It looked a little as if a time had been chosen when Martin was away—purposely chosen. As if Martin would try to stop it! Frances would have stopped it if she could, Martin felt sure, but she was not a woman to make futile gestures. Besides, she must have realized the advantages to her son.

So Martin was spared the sight and memory of the ceremony which took place at the little Lutheran church in Brooklyn—the same kind of church in which Axel and Anna had been married. Frances was there, of course, and Anna. They had both been present on that other occasion. For the rest it was a new generation—Sarah, Fanny and her husband, back from their tour, and one or two people from CRUMPLE CAKES.

Sarah was the first to go into any detail about the wedding, to give Martin actual news of it, beyond the bare facts. He heard from Sarah a new name—Morris Silverton. Funny, how during the course of a life new names kept popping up and old ones fading. It was as if each human being were dealt a certain number of names at the beginning, as one is dealt a hand at cards. Then, as life goes on, the hand changes. You discard—you draw—you play. You might end the game without a single card from the original deal. Martin, thinking along this line, was getting into pretty rough waters. He was not enough of a card player to be secure in the analogy. This Morris Silverton had been at the wedding. Just why he was there—except that he was connected with the cake company—was never clear. He worked in the office, as book-keeper, Martha having found that the accounts had outgrown her own personal supervision.

"He's a Jew, isn't he?" Martin asked Sarah. "The name—Silverton—I must have seen him in the office. I never noticed him."

"It's a wonder you wouldn't have," said Sarah, "he's a

singularly pure oriental type—he has a head like a king's portrait on an Egyptian tomb."

"Did you tell him so?" asked Martin.

"As a matter of fact, I think I did. I had to say something. He was extraordinarily quiet—refreshingly unassuming. We found ourselves standing on the church steps together. Mother had left—she thought I was going to Martha's place, which I wasn't—nobody was—so there I stood, rather at loose ends."

Poor Frances—what trouble she had with her children! One of them marrying a baker, another a man who performed in blackface, and a third at loose ends on some church steps in the company—obviously not unwelcome—of a Jewish book-keeper. Martin might so easily have found out from Sarah the history of the rest of her day, but he had no idea then that it mattered. What mattered was Martha. He wanted to see her. He had a heavy sense of her being Julian's wife. It was an oppression which never left him. If he could see her, perhaps he would see that she was still Martha. It was as if she were avoiding him. But this couldn't be for long, as there was business to attend to. She would be twenty-one very soon, and she wanted to incorporate. Martin must help her in every way he could. He had Tom Fleetwood draw up some papers, tentatively, and send them to her. She sent them back with comments.

It was natural enough that their first meeting, since her marriage, should be in Fleetwood's office. She hadn't changed. She was still the same. The past weeks had been a nightmare from which Martin had waked. The little gold band on the fourth finger of her left hand—~~that~~ meant nothing.

"My birthday was yesterday," ^{she}were Martha's first words.

"Yes, I know."

Tom Fleetwood spoke: "I think it will be wise for you to make a statement, ratifying your infant contracts. Then there will be no question of your repudiating them."

"I have no intention of repudiating them—"

"Naturally not. But such a statement will expedite matters, in view of the money involved."

The money was considerable. Martin had all Martha's notes in a big envelope which he now laid on Fleetwood's desk. "I think you'll find them all complete," he said to Martha. "I should like to destroy them in your presence. You owe me nothing."

"Why, Cousin Martin!"

Tom Fleetwood's expression reminded Martin of the old man's, when faced with the unexpected. "Is that in place of the arrangement of which you spoke to me?"

"No," said Martin.

"What arrangement?" Martha asked.

"The capital—"

Fleetwood cut in—"You see, Mrs. Lyndendaal—"

For a moment, Martin didn't know whom the lawyer was addressing. As soon as he knew, he corrected it. "I'm sure she won't mind if you call her Martha. It's all in the family."

The correction was adopted without comment. "You see, Martha, your father-in-law is placing at your disposal a very considerable sum. There is Julian's future to be considered—naturally, he has that tremendously at heart—so he feels that the business should be run on a rather larger scale."

"I've been going ahead as fast as I thought best," said Martha.

"Your judgment has been very sound, but now—"

"Now?"

Martin didn't say anything. That was what lawyers were for, to handle situations like this, and to make a legal definition of a difficult circumstance.

Tom Fleetwood smiled his dry smile. "Julian is now merely a salesman. I understand that he goes about to shops and restaurants with a cake in his pocket, bringing out his sample at the psychological moment. When the business is larger he

can occupy a more strictly executive position—one more in keeping with his—his—”

“Talents?” Martha suggested.

“Yes. You understand what I mean?”

“What you mean is perfectly simple.” Martha paused. She turned to Martin. “I was afraid of something like this.”

“Like what?” Martin asked.

“I was afraid you had something of this sort in view, and it might not work out so well.”

Martin had had nothing in view, and said so.

“But surely to secure the future of your son—” The lawyer bristled a little.

“Martha’s right. It wouldn’t work out so well, not Julian in an executive position—so where’s the security?” They were all treading on delicate ground, and Martin spoke as he did, being fully aware of this.

Fleetwood evidently was conscious of not saying many things which he might have said. It was Martha on whom the burden of speech fell most heavily:

“My point is that Julian in an executive position would be wasted, while now his value is very great. The company owes a great deal to his happy talent for going about with a cake in his pocket—though it’s really in a little box that he carries them. Would you take him out of something he can do and put him in something he can’t?”

Martin took it lightly. “I’m afraid, Tom, we can’t advise this young lady on what use she shall make of her employees.”

Fleetwood muttered something about a woman’s husband being hardly an employee. But that was off the record, and plainly enough not what he wished to take up. “Are you still prepared to go on, Martin? Knowing how Mrs. Lyndendaal feels—” No use correcting him about the name again—he had used it intentionally—even with a certain emphasis.

“Yes, of course, I’m prepared to go on.”

“Having no control,” Fleetwood continued, “no actual

control whatever, over the policies of her Corporation?"

"No control whatever."

"You accept this oral assurance, Mrs. Lyndendaal?"

"That's quite good enough." Martha smiled suddenly. She had not been smiling. "He's trusting me a great deal more than I'm trusting him!"

Martin made as if to pat her hand and then thought better of it. "If everyone trusted us as we trust each other, we'd soon have the world in our pocket," he said instead.

"That would be better than having a cake there, wouldn't it?"

The lawyer waited for them to get through. He had something serious to say—not just nonsense. "You understand, Martin, that you will be merely a general unsecured creditor of the Corporation? The stock will be issued on this basis. A million dollars is, of course, a very large sum."

"And what has a million dollars got to do with it?" Martha asked.

"It is what your father-in-law is prepared to invest—or to advance, perhaps I should say, in a series of periodic loans for which the Corporation will give him notes."

"I didn't know," said Martha. "It is—it is indeed—a very large sum."

Martin thought he'd told her, but he realized that no exact figure had ever been mentioned between them. He'd so much else to think about—and so had she.

"Perhaps that makes a difference in your—er—your plans?" Fleetwood suggested.

"Yes, a great deal of difference."

"Perhaps, as Martin Lyndendaal's son, Julian will be entitled to a consideration he—"

Martha cut him off. "He has always been entitled to consideration, Mr. Fleetwood."

"I assure you, I didn't mean—"

"I know what you meant. But now, with this ample back-

ing, I shall have to be particularly careful concerning all my plans. And careful to find an assistant who can meet the competition he will be called upon to meet. It's not my husband's fault that he's not a business man in that sense—he's never had any reason to be a business man—any training. His father has been always so completely occupied—a man, you might say, of world affairs—he couldn't give the time—”

So that was what Julian had told her. But a son couldn't depend wholly on his father for guidance. Martin's own father had been drowned when Martin was a small child. Martha didn't need to rub it in, that Julian was his fault. Perhaps she realized this, for she turned to him— “Don't think I'm blaming you, Cousin Martin, and I haven't begun to say how generous I think you are. I was totally unprepared. A million dollars . . .” It was plain Martha cared a great deal about a million dollars—more than Martin ever could.

Fleetwood must choose again among the many things he had to say, the many questions he would have liked to ask: “May I inquire, Mrs. Lyndendaal—” He loved the title—it put Martha in her place, and Martin, too, and he was somewhat angry at both of them. “May I inquire if you know of anyone who would meet your critical approval regarding the position of assistant which will shortly be open in your baking company?”

“I really haven't thought about it very much, but I believe I know just the man.”

“You are indeed fortunate.”

Martin would like to know, too, but it wasn't any of his business, having no control. Martha, however, was perfectly willing to tell them both. She was so honest and so open that it was a little painful.

“It's a man named Morris Silverton. At present, he's my accountant. He's one of the shrewdest business men I've ever seen. His father's a lawyer. He studied law and worked in

his father's office. Then the war came. He was all through that. Saving your presence, Mr. Fleetwood, he never liked the law, so after the war was over he studied bookkeeping. He had an idea he might go into banking, but at that time jobs weren't so easy to get. Mine came along and he took it. He has great faith in the future of CRUMPLE CAKES. By the way, he's a Jew."

"So I gathered." There was a wealth of distaste in Fleetwood's tone. He hated the Jews. He turned to Martin: "Did you ever hear of this paragon?"

Yes, Martin had heard of him. "And from what I hear," Martin went on, "he must be quite something."

Fleetwood rose, rather in the manner of a fussing hen, who has sat long enough over her eggs. "Then it's all agreed."

The past few years had taken their toll of Tom Fleetwood, Martin noticed. He seemed to have been subjected to a drying process. This would probably continue, having been begun, until the sap of life were altogether out of him. His father had been a little like that, too. But old Fleetwood's era was an easier time—lustier, in a sense, and yet quieter.

Martha made no move to leave. "You spoke a while ago of my ratifying my infant contracts. Just what would you consider those were?"

Fleetwood indicated some papers on his desk. "They're probably all noted in this statement of your affairs—a very clear statement, I might say—" Fleetwood gave the devil his due— "Possibly we have this Mr. Silvermine to thank—"

"Silverton," said Martha. The correction was waved aside.

Martin had just thought of something. "Don't forget your mother. The cakes were her idea in the first place. You have, I believe, paid her a percentage."

"Mrs. Christiansen is one of the three incorporators," Fleetwood explained.

"Who's the third?"

"You are. Mrs. Christiansen will be paid for what you call

her idea, in stock. It will not be, in any sense, a controlling interest—"

"It will be very nice for Mother to have a comfortable income, all her own," said Martha.

"An income in addition to the one she will be earning by her care of the boy." It was brutal of Martin, bringing the subject up in this manner, but it seemed as good a time as any to bring it up. "You remember the boy of whom I spoke, Martha? The boy I adopted? You remember him, Tom? Anna Christiansen is exactly the woman to look after him—and it'll be a blessing to her now—what with her daughter married and away—"

Fleetwood was shocked but recovered himself. "It's an extraordinarily generous offer on your father-in-law's part," he addressed Martha. "I should say, an act, perhaps—it's more than an offer. Taking this child, right out of the gutter, as one might say—"

"Oh, you don't have to explain," Martha cut in. Martha knew who the child was and Fleetwood didn't. Fleetwood thought it was Martin's child.

"Oh," the lawyer breathed, "oh—" That ejaculation was in place of his more definitely expressed surprise that Martin should have taken Martha into his confidence. Then he became very brisk and businesslike: "Have you approached Mrs. Christiansen in the matter?"

"Have you, Martha?" Martin asked. "Perhaps you'd rather have me speak to her—"

"No," said Martha, "I'll attend to it. It seems to me that under the circumstances it's the very least I can do."

"The very least," said Fleetwood, making with Martha his first hearty agreement.

He was thinking of the million dollars, probably, and so was Martha. Martin was thinking of circumstances less easy to define. Whether or not Anna would consent to take the boy was doubtful, no matter what Martha did about it, or

what good word she put in for the scheme. Besides, a million dollars was an absurd sum to be in any way regarded as a bribe.

"I'd like to get it settled," said Martin, "though I realize in such a case one must make haste slowly."

"I should hate to be on hand," Fleetwood commented, "when you decided to make haste quickly!"

"Oh, haven't you?" asked Martha. "I thought you were Cousin Martin's lawyer."

"That, too. I also had the temerity to marry his wife's sister."

"Yes, I know, I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Fleetwood that night at dinner. Just one big lovely family, we all are." Martha rose. "You get everything ready, Mr. Fleetwood, and then let me know."

"Oh, by the way—" said Martin. He picked up the envelope containing Martha's notes. "I haven't destroyed these yet—" He proceeded to do so, making something of a ceremony of the act. He could see that to Tom Fleetwood it was a form of sacrilege. "Is this satisfactory to you, Martha?" he inquired, when he was through.

"Why, of course, everything is satisfactory! You'll receive some of the new stock, you know—you, as well as Mother. Much as you may hate to take it—" She turned to the lawyer: "Again, not in any sense a controlling interest. Incidentally, Mr. Fleetwood, I think I should explain that Cousin Martin always wanted to do something like this for my father, but Father wouldn't let him. I'm more appreciative. You never knew my father. You should have. He was a great man."

Martha left very quickly. Martin would have left with her, but he couldn't get to his feet in time. Besides, he didn't want to have the look, before Tom Fleetwood, of rushing after her. Alone, he couldn't resist a question:

"What do you think of her?"

Fleetwood was engaged in picking up the little pieces of

the notes which Martin had destroyed, and placing them neatly in the scrap basket. "I was always given to understand that Julian was a coward. But he can't be—having married that girl."

"There's something in what you say," Martin admitted. "And now—if we can go over things in a little more detail—"

It was all settled in the next half hour—statements drafted, terms outlined. Everything was arranged except the actual incorporation, and Martin's first check, which could not be put through until the corporation had existence.

"By the way," said Martin, "I should like a report on this Morris Silverton. I don't trust the judgment of women where men are concerned."

"I thought you said you'd heard of him already."

"I have. He's a friend of Sarah's."

"Oh, really! That rather changes the picture, doesn't it?"

"Does it? Sarah's a woman."

The report on Silverton showed nothing to his discredit. And even Julian couldn't dig up anything against him, though he admitted he didn't like him.

"Figures speak a sort of language to him," Julian said. "They jump through hoops for him—they sit up and beg. He can tell you the exact profit on anything—any time—any place. Anything else he knows is just a sort of extra—and he knows plenty. He knows just where he'll be ten years from now."

But no one knew that—Silverton least of all. Ten years from the time of Julian's calculations, where Silverton was, was a place he couldn't possibly have foreseen. You could prophesy in such a way only if you were old and dying—and perhaps not then. Ten years . . . No, Martin hadn't known so very much about his own future in 1922. He knew more now—about his own future, that is to say, not the future of the world at large. He at least knew where his bones would be, if there was any satisfaction in such knowledge. Because

it was doubtful if anything would bring wreckage to the great cemetery where Frances had already found a suitable resting place. In being buried beside his wife, Martin would be doing what was expected of him—the last such thing which he would be asked to do.

These bones of Martin's—they were becoming more visible, day by day, just as everything else was becoming more visible. But this last was what he had most hoped for. He had launched himself on a search for truth—not the great world truths of the philosophers, he would be incapable of such a voyage, but the narrow and comparatively simple truth contained within the brain and being of one man. There were circumstances that he never understood, that yet influenced his whole existence. There were people whom he never understood, of whom the same thing could be said. It was as if they functioned outside his own capacity for thinking. He never understood his wife or Martha, and both these people were tremendously important to him, and to what he was, and to what he became. He knew their surface aspects, even the facts of their lives and the forces gone to their making. He was usually right about what they would be apt to do. But he didn't understand them as he understood Julian, whom he despised, or Anna, whom he admired, or Sarah, who was his favorite child.

And it was through these people who surrounded him, and who had surrounded him, that he must get at this truth he wanted, not only about them but about himself. Martin was not a Yogi who can spend his life upon a mountain top in contemplation of the eternal. There was nothing abstract about him—there never had been—it was his work and his people that made him. It wasn't in any wonder at his own perfection that he thought about himself. If he could think of his sins without weeping for them, it wasn't because he forgave himself their commission. He had been unfaithful, both to his wife and—on occasions that didn't matter—to

Martha. He had been neither a good husband nor a good father. He had worked hard because he had liked to work hard, so where was the credit? In pursuit of his own selfish ends he had sacrificed people who had never done him harm. But all this was as he was. He knew that he was such. He derived from the knowledge a certain satisfaction. Among all his possessions, he—Martin Lyndendaal—was the most valuable. He derived from himself a satisfaction which had no justification in the face of proof.

He had now, in regard to himself, very much the same sense which he had felt—for a time, at least—about Martha's marriage to Julian. Why he should have looked upon it with approval he didn't know—neither then nor now—but he did. While Martha was married to Julian, she was safe, he felt. Safe from Julian, whom he didn't trust, and safe, also from any outburst which he—Martin—might suddenly make. It was a barrier. It was also a bond between the two of them. She became, married to Julian, as he had once described her as becoming—his own dear daughter. And she seemed happy. Why shouldn't she seem happy, having both the labor and the man she loved? Being young and strong and full of hope? What more could a woman ask for? It was as though she were dressed in a shining armor through which no harm could penetrate, or standing on a height to which no hurt could reach.

38

It was, perhaps, little enough for Martha to do, to speak to her mother about taking the boy, Julian's son by another woman, and now Martin's son by a handful of papers duly signed and witnessed.

It had all been very easy, she told Martin. Anna would have the child for a visit and see how they got along. It was

characteristic of Martha during these days to think everything easy.

"What did you tell your mother?" Martin asked her.

"Nothing. Just that there was this child in whom you'd taken an interest, and you wanted her to bring him up for a while. I suppose he'll be going to school sooner or later. Mother says she won't accept any money from you—only for his clothes, and so forth. She has plenty of money to feed a boy with."

"She wouldn't mind if I were to get her a cottage at the seaside? Summer's coming on and it's hot—even in Brooklyn."

"You can arrange all that when you see her—"

"Yes, when I take the boy over," said Martin.

"Let her know when you're bringing him. She'll want to have things ready. I suppose he can use my room."

"Shall I send over some furniture?"

"What for? There's plenty of furniture in the room already."

"I thought you and Julian might have taken it."

He knew perfectly well they hadn't. But he had thought Martha might not want the boy to have her own little iron bed, and the oak bureau and the two chairs and the shabby schoolgirl's desk where so many lessons had been studied. The place where Julian and Martha were living had been furnished, all at once, by an establishment which specialized in such emergencies. The happy couple had chosen their possessions on a Saturday, and moved in complete the following Thursday. Not one hour lost from the service of CRUMPLE CAKES. Sarah, sensitive to such matters, commented briefly—

"I should think they'd feel as though they were living in a shop window. Oh, a good shop, but still, at that, they might wake up one morning and see a crowd gathered. I myself should have been a little more beware of brown and tan,

but the red in the draperies saves it from looking too much like a maple cream puff!"

With these material aspects, Martin himself was not concerned. He was glad he still had Anna's place to go to. With the nurse, whose last duty was thus discharged, he took the boy over. Whatever Anna thought, she didn't say—not then—certainly not in front of the nurse, or the child, who didn't have a great deal to say, either, though he behaved well enough. He was such a fine handsome boy. His striking resemblance to his grandfather might be in itself, awkward, but Martin could bear the awkwardness.

"What is your name?" Anna asked him.

"Lyn-den-daal," he answered slowly.

"But your first name—what people call you?"

"That hasn't been decided upon," said Martin quickly.

"Then I shall call you Barn."

"Like what a horse lives in?"

"No, not like that. It's short for *drengébarn*, which means 'little boy.'"

It wasn't for some time after, that they named him Matthew.

It was such a domestic scene—Martin and the two women and the child. The little boy had been given his supper before he came, but Anna brought out a beautiful flowered mug with milk in it, and there were cookies on a little plate. Martin waited while the women put the boy to bed. Then the nurse left—Anna saw her to the door—and then, finally, Anna and Martin were alone.

"I don't say I'll keep him," Anna spoke. "He'll likely be a great nuisance to me."

"All children are nuisances, my mother used to say, but you'll grow attached to him."

"I know—you're counting on that. Will you have some coffee, Martin? Oh—I should have offered that woman some—she seemed a good sensible woman. She's started the boy

on the right road, you can see. He does what he's told without any fuss." Martin accepted the coffee, and it was while Anna was stirring about, getting out the cups, that she made her only reference to that which was in both their minds. "The poor nameless brat—" The only reference, unless you include what she said to Martin when he thanked her for taking him.

"I'm very grateful to you, Anna," Martin said. "I don't know what I should have done if you'd refused."

"You should have thought of that a long time ago!"

So the boy was settled and Martha was settled and Julian was settled. There was nothing for Martin to do now but to take care of his steel. He had that, and otherwise but the one obligation—to make a great deal of money. He needed money for his own uses and the uses of his own company, and to meet his commitments to the Crumple Cake Corporation. But all this was not too difficult, as money begets money and the rich man can become richer, if he keeps his head. Times were good. The demand for structural steel was greater than the supply. Skilled steel workers were a bit scarce, and their wages high, but that could be managed. There hadn't been a bad strike since 1919, and that one hadn't affected Martin seriously. His interests were not in the striking areas, Pennsylvania and the Middle West. Besides, the unions and most of the union leaders regarded him as their friend. He had always got along with them, and agitators had a hard time promoting trouble in any plant with which he was in any way connected.

Martin worked hard, but he played hard, too. Through Fanny and her husband, he met a number of theatrical people. They were a breed comparatively new to him. The men, for the most part, he didn't like, though he noticed that the successful ones were shrewd hard-working business men, the same as anyone else. The women, some of them, were quite lovely. Those Martin met, he met through Haz-

zard Blue, whose field was musical comedy and a hybrid form of entertainment known as *Revue*. These girls were either singers or dancers or show girls. Occasionally there would be a woman comedian—these were rare, as there was something about humor, as such, which didn't fit with women. Displaying handsome clothes, or lack of them, fitted perfectly. The show girls were all exceptionally tall and slender. They must keep themselves to a certain weight, and their faces, hair and hands just so. It seemed to Martin that they thought of nothing but their bodies, spending a major portion of their generous salaries on adornment, and some of them discreetly spending more than could be accounted for in a pay-check. The temptations of their profession must have been very great. The hard headed ones resisted most of them. They were interesting, as a class and as a spectacle, which last included their looks. They were also—with an occasional exception—as a class, completely devoid of interest.

The dancers were somewhat higher in the scale. After all, they could do something. This also held true of the singers. One thought struck Martin particularly about all these people. They were either on their way up or on their way down, and the ascent and descent seemed to be quicker in that profession than in any other. Only the great stars remained at any level, and even with them the foothold was none too secure. They must never rest on their laurels. Hazard Blue told Martin that he had his plans for the future all laid. Meanwhile he was doing pretty well for himself and for Fanny. He was the one member of the family who was in no way dependent on Martin. His way of life would have been unchanged if Martin's steel had ceased to exist, or if Martin himself had died and left nothing behind him.

It was a pretty good marriage which Fanny had made. The arbiter of all such matters, Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal, admitted this freely, and shed the light of her presence on her

daughter's establishment whenever she was able. Fanny provided her with her first legitimate male grandchild and, after a suitable interval, with her second. As if to make a little room for these on earth, Mrs. Calverton died. Her death was a very genuine loss to Martin, who should have been inured to such things. Mrs. Calverton was a very remarkable woman—far more so than any of her children, with the possible exception of Frances. It was a curious thing about children. They either turned out better than the parents, or worse. Never the same. If Martha had had a child, there was no guarantee of a second Martha. And of all Martin Lyndendaal's five grandchildren, Julian's son was the best of the lot. They were all superior, but he was the outstanding one. Why?

Was there something which Zari Hanajos provided to that racial strain, which was needful and entirely apart from any spiritual grace—something to complete the whole? A certain night came, freighted with events to shatter Martin's newly established calm, and Martin had to readjust his estimate of Zari Hanajos. You thought of such a woman as taking only the easiest way, of grasping closely that which was at hand, reaching out to shake the tree, but hardly climbing for the finer fruit. To a certain point, she had ambition, though it be but the ambition of the barbarian agog for conquest.

The Blues were giving a party. They gave their parties on Sunday nights. This was to be something exceptional, according to the advance notices in all the papers. The guests were to have the pleasure of seeing a performance by a Russian troupe of entertainers, and many people prominent in professional and society circles would be present. Numbered among the fortunate were Mrs. Blue's distinguished parents, her beautiful sister, the Countess Mattiabelli, and her brother and her brother's wife. Mrs. Julian Lyndendaal, it was, who had made such a notable success in business and

whose cakes—larger than life—were invitingly portrayed on bill boards in all the five boroughs of Greater New York, plus Long Island and Westchester.

At the last moment Frances couldn't go. Frances wasn't very well. The fifties were a ticklish period in a woman's life. The doctor said she did too much and must take things more easily. There was nothing serious, nothing that care and rest wouldn't mend, he said. So Martin went with Sarah. Blue himself met them at the door, the black scrupulously absent from his face, and the whole get-up that of the impeccable host. It was Julian who had once remarked that Blue's clothes fitted him too loosely on the stage and too snugly off it. But Julian, on his mother's side at least, was an aristocrat and might be permitted the aristocratic scorn of mountebanks.

"The Russian company—it's really quite clever—you'll like it—"

"I'm sure we shall, darling," said the countess. Sarah had picked up from Blue the appellation darling, and used it on all occasions.

"Is it a Russian play?" Martin asked dubiously. He had seen a Russian play in which all the actors committed suicide, one by one, except the sole survivor who was overtaken by fate in some other guise, Martin didn't recall exactly what.

"Oh, no—Russian music hall stuff," Blue reassured him.

The Blue apartment centered about an enormous studio room with a platform at one end, usually arranged for dining. It could be turned into a sort of stage, in which capacity it now functioned. A very magnificent curtain was drawn close. Behind the curtain could be heard the chatter of the Russians and the moving about of this and that. As the audience gathered, the place was packed with first names and greetings. Everyone was very glad to be here—that was plain enough—and making very sure their presence would not pass unobserved. Fanny was here, there and everywhere; lacking

Sarah's inimitable distinction, she yet had her own individual quality.

"I don't see Martha and Julian," Martin said.

"Oh, I'm sure they'll come—they promised—and I'm sure they'll have a good time!" Fanny was always so anxious that everyone have a good time. "How does Sylvia like her school?" she asked Sarah.

"She's crazy about it. How's the baby?"

"Couldn't be better. The doctor says if all babies were as healthy as mine are, he'd have to close his office!" Fanny turned away.

"Fancy your having a child old enough to go to school—learning the three R's—" some man told Sarah.

"Oh, they don't teach the three R's any more—it's all very progressive—"

"What does it progress to?" the man laughed, leading Sarah away.

Martin saw Julian and Martha come in, and made towards them. Julian had improved since his marriage. Most of the sullenness was gone from his face. Martha had become completely lovely. Martin tucked his arm through hers. "Let's find seats together—"

"Didn't Mother come?" asked Julian. Martin explained about that. "Oh, I'm sorry, I'll try to pop in and see her—" Julian was very devoted to his mother.

They were fortunate in finding seats well towards the front.

"Fanny and Hazzard give such wonderful parties," Martha said. "They know just how to go about it."

"Why shouldn't they?" Julian protested.

"Well, most people don't."

It was true, the occasion was getting off to a good start. There was that peculiar quality in the air, presage of success. The tone was high now, but you felt it only the beginning. The chatter on both sides of the curtain was little short

of deafening. Suddenly the lights went low. The darkness brought silence—complete silence when a beam of light picked out a parting in the curtain just wide enough to permit the single file appearance of four figures. They were strangely dressed, and carried curious instruments upon which, after seating themselves rather deliberately, they proceeded to play. The light widened sufficiently to engulf them in a kind of foggy brilliance. The playing was a wailing sound plucked forth from strings.

Martin had arranged himself in the middle, between Julian and Martha. He noticed that Julian seemed to be taking a very keen interest in what was going on. Such an interest was not characteristic of Julian, who was inclined to accept diversion, rather than co-operate with it. But now he was leaning forward in his chair, staring. It was as if he would stare down the deceptiveness of the lighting, and the distance—not great at all—which separated him from the performers.

Then the curtain parted wholly. The players of the overture joined those on the stage, where there were already a dozen figures. The lights were on full now, and picked out the detail of costume and get-up. Everything could be seen—the women, with their bright wide dresses and odd head-gear, the men like pictures of Cossacks Martin remembered having seen in school books. The women's faces were heavily painted with red spots on their cheeks and deep shadows beneath their eyes. The men were ghastly white—almost as white as clowns. A man started to dance. He wore shining boots that came right up to his hips. He jumped and whirled and stamped his feet and uttered cries—all this accompanied by the musicians, who had ranged themselves at the back. Then all the people on the stage were dancing and singing, the women revolving like slow tops, the men leaping about them.

A line from a poem he had heard or read came to Martin. It was from some poem by Kipling, which would be a safe

guess, as most of the poems Martin remembered were by Kipling. "But oh, beware of Adamzad—The bear that walks like a man—" That was it, exactly. These Russians were entirely occupied with their own business—dancing, singing, playing—and yet Martin felt that they might suddenly stop all that and spring out at him. He had felt so once at a circus, when a cageful of animals were being put through their paces. This was why the Russian troupe was so dramatic. There was an element of danger. The danger made you forgive the dancing, which was clumsy, and the singing, which was inharmonious, and the appeal to the vision, which was—to say the least—coarse. "But oh, beware—"

Julian was still staring. He was staring especially at one of the women. She seemed to puzzle him, though there was nothing about her to puzzle him, except that she was distinctly the handsomest of the lot. Her outlandish make-up didn't mar too much her natural beauty, or hide her magnificent eyes, which slanted and were a little far apart. There was something familiar to Martin about her eyes, though he couldn't have said what. Her hair was black as velvet, and fell in two thick braids from beneath her head-dress.

A man seated behind Julian and Martin leaned forward between them: "She's an interesting type, isn't she?" he whispered. He pronounced it, *teep*. "But I don't think she's Russian. I'm Russian myself, and I've been listening to her sing. She speaks with an accent."

Julian started as though he'd been stung by an insect. What difference could it possibly make to him, whether the woman was Russian or not? "What kind of an accent?"

"I can't quite make it out."

Julian evidently had the same feeling that Martin had, that the human guise was merely an illusion, and that the animals might suddenly spring. This was exactly his manner. He was uneasy—particularly so about the woman. And perhaps because she made him uneasy, he never took his eyes

off her. It was Sarah who had said once something to the effect that Julian preferred women of whom he was afraid.

Wilder and wilder went the dance, the playing louder, the tempo faster, the cries and the singing more piercing. And then a crash. The crash was unexpected because the cymbals making it had been, up to now, concealed. One moment it was like bedlam and the next everything stopped. The curtain drew shut very quickly. A pause before the clapping came—appreciation from a polite though critical audience. One woman announced, in a clear carrying voice—"You know, I think we could learn something from these Russians. They have an *élan*." But she was old and couldn't possibly have imitated their performance.

Julian leaned over towards Martha. "Let's go home."

"Go home! Why, Fanny would think we were awfully rude if we went home now! It was you who were so anxious to come, in the first place. Besides, it's going to be great fun. I think they're marvelous. Don't you, Cousin Martin?"

Martin was absorbed in a highly concentrated speculation, and barely heard her. "Oh, yes," he said, "marvelous."

Julian mumbled something like, "Much better—to go home now—" And then he announced, "All right. We'll stay. But don't forget, I offered to go."

"If Julian wants to go, Martha," Martin suggested, "why not let him? I'll take you home."

"No," said Julian, "I've changed my mind." He rose. "But I think I'll stretch my legs before the next number goes on. These chairs aren't too comfortable."

It was perfectly true, the chairs weren't comfortable, either for Julian or for Martin. They were of the folding variety, so often provided for such entertainments, and not geared for men of the Lyndendaal build.

Martin rose also. "I'll go with you."

"You don't have to. I can take care of myself."

A while ago, Martin had been noticing how well Julian

looked—as if the past few years had smoothed out all the less desirable attributes which had once been obvious. These moments here had put them all back. The chairs were just an excuse on Julian's part, of course. He wanted to get away, but not with his father tagging after him. While Martin was debating what to do, the lights went down again, and there was no choice then but for him to reseat himself as best he might. There was a moment when nothing happened. And then he heard Julian slip away under cover of the darkness.

This piece was quieter. They sang a song like a dirge, all sitting in a semi-circle and swaying. Martin thought it would never end. He was hoping that Julian had changed his mind a second time, and decided to leave, after all. Hoping this, for some reason or other—he had no definite reason—he knew the hope was vain. Julian wouldn't go now. He was still here. Martin was sure he was here, in spite of looking for him, when the piece was finally over, and not being able to find him.

Martha didn't seem worried about Julian's absence.

"He's probably gone to find a drink," she said. "Sit down, Cousin Martin, they're going to do some more."

Martha was having a good time, and she wasn't letting anything spoil it. Martin hadn't had so much the impression in a long while that Martha still kept in her something of the child. She was a very young girl at her first grown-up party. That was the way she seemed. Well, her pleasure must continue. When the show on the stage was over, Martin took it upon himself to see that this should be the case. It wasn't too difficult. She was so fresh, so secure, and—unlike so many of the people present—she didn't have to be afraid that her presence would pass unobserved, because whether it did or not would be a matter of utter indifference to her. She wasn't afraid of anything, Martin remembered afterwards. He decided it would do her good to get about more, and advised her accordingly. CRUMPLE CAKES, INCORPORATED, was a fine thing, but it shouldn't be—for a young and beautiful

woman—the sum and total of existence. Of course, for Martha, it wasn't—she had Julian.

Fanny was twittering with the success of the occasion. "They're clearing the stage now, and soon we'll have a bit of supper. After that, perhaps we can persuade some of the others to prove that all the talent doesn't come from Russia! So much talent here to-night—it's a trifle overwhelming—" Fanny's voice trailed off into laughter.

The Russians, still in their bizarre costumes, were being taken in charge by Hazzard Blue. Several men were talking to the woman Julian had stared at. Among these, Martin was somewhat relieved to notice Julian himself. At least you knew where he was, and what he was doing. But Julian wasn't talking—merely standing at the outer edge of the little circle, with an expression on his face which Martin made no attempt to decipher.

The woman was really very beautiful in a barbaric sort of way. Martin didn't blame his son for having stared, or being now somewhat bemused. He moved away from Martha, who didn't seem to need him any more, and came closer to the group of which this stranger was the center. Rather to his surprise, she was speaking English with a good deal of fluency. She had a curious low voice, and an accent which was foreign, though not like the foreign accent of a person who has been carefully taught. It was something picked up from the streets, and superimposed upon a foreign tongue also picked up from the streets—a sound with which Martin was very familiar. It would have been wiser for the woman to stick to Russian. But then most of Fanny's guests didn't run steel mills and didn't employ Hunkie labor. Martin knew, all at once, who the woman was. Though there was, in fact, insufficient reason why he should, at this early moment, have been so definite about the identification.

Sometimes Martin acted wholly on instinct, on impulse, and against any judgment he might have formed if he'd

given himself space for judgment. He bore straight down on Zari Hanajos and Julian and the half dozen people among whom, for him, they were the only ones. His appearance on this terrain drew all eyes—even drew them away from Hazzard Blue who, from the room side of the drawn curtain, was making some announcement concerning the readiness of refreshments.

"Come," he said to Julian, "I think we better go, after all." He should have known better. Martin was always stupid where Julian was concerned.

"Why should we?" Julian answered him. And then, to the woman—"Zari, this is my father. Mme. Zari, Father—"

"Oh, I am so glad to know your father!" She might as well have smacked her lips, she was so glad.

It would be difficult to reproduce either tone or manner. There was a coolness in them both, and a bravado, and—towards Julian—an intimacy which yet did not include any trace of friendship. She had the boldness to extend her hand to Martin, that same barbaric hand of which the doctor had once spoken. Martin ignored the hand, at least to the extent of not taking it, and certainly not kissing it, which last was evidently what Zari had expected. In fact, he must have appeared extremely rude, not even immediately troubling to acknowledge the introduction in any way.

Zari spoke again: "I was hoping so much that I would some day know you, Mr. Lyn-den-daal."

"How do you do?" said Martin at last, with no warmth in the inquiry.

"Is it perhaps that you were not hoping the same thing?" This was sheer effrontery. Then she became wholly direct—"Please get this straight. Julian was the last man I looked to see to-night. It would not be worth it to me—"

"I can quite appreciate that," Martin cut in.

The other men, sensing unpleasantness, had eased themselves away. There were Julian and Martin and Zari, and no

one else near them. The room was so big, and everyone else was moving up towards the stage, which was now set with little tables like the tables in a café.

"It was not my doing, his speaking to me," Zari went on.

"All right," said Martin, "we'll let that pass. But now, either he or you will have to go!"

"Say—what is all this? I don't get it." It was Julian who made the inquiry.

Zari turned to him. "There's plenty you don't get, Julian—there always was—but I get money every month to keep out of your way. I am not good for nice young men."

The woman didn't have to boast of it. She wouldn't be good for any man. Martin had seen a lot of women in his time, but he'd never seen any one of them who flew her danger signals so high, wide and handsome. She was the life force gone evil, which was rather a trite and melodramatic statement of what she was, but it was the only phrase to cover it. A good deal had been said here and there about Anna's not being a lady. Compared to Zari Hanajos, Anna was a combination of Queen Mary and Mrs. Astor. This entirely apart from any moral difference. But Martin had to admit that Zari wasn't acting badly under the circumstances. Perhaps, being herself the personification of trouble, she had no need or wish to make it—for its own sake. And she never forgot where her own interests lay.

"I think you better go, Julian, if your father wants you to—" She made the mistake of laying her hand on Julian's arm. The movement was probably instinctive, but it wouldn't and didn't have the effect of backing up her suggestion. So a mermaid might have reached out and drawn a sailor into the sea.

Zari and Martha—the two extremes of womanhood—nothing commonplace about either of them—nothing that came in dozen lots. And Julian had been courted by both. Whether, in Zari's case, the wooing had been shabbily moti-

vated, the fact remained. Martin's respect for his son rose. The young man was, to repeat the words of Charlie Rosch, a picker. Martin had to make a number of readjustments as he stood there with Julian and Zari. For the first time in his life he admitted a woman extremely prepossessing, without its arousing in himself the slightest stirring of desire. He could count points, as a judge might at a county fair, and with the same expert understanding. He could know the menace of her pirate colors. And, for himself, he could remain unstirred. He could not have done that when he'd been young—not even with a woman whom he had as much reason to distrust as he distrusted Zari. He couldn't have resisted the impact.

As it became clear that Julian was making no move to do as he was told, Martin played a further card.

"Come," he said to Zari, "get your wraps—I'll take you home."

"Ah," she smiled, "I was hoping you'd do that! I must first speak to Ivan—Ivan is the director of our little company—but he will not mind. He never minds when gentlemen take me home—gentlemen like yourself, Mr. Lyn-den-daal—"

There was something in the way she pronounced the name that reminded Martin of the little boy's slow struggle with the same three syllables. Could it have been that she had taught the child to speak the word? No, he'd spoken hardly at all when he had first come under Martin's charge. It had been the trained nurse—such a sensible woman, Anna had said she was—who had given him speech.

"That's very generous of him," said Julian, referring back to quite another matter, "not to mind when gentlemen—"

Zari cut him off by turning away, in the direction of the stage, where Ivan would be occupied with supper. A step or more removed, she threw a glance at Julian over her shoulder. "Is it not so?" she said.

Martin, with so much else to think about, had not been

keeping check upon Martha, and had supposed—if he'd supposed anything—that she had joined the area of the feast, still in the care of the pleasant and well authenticated young man with whom he had left her. Martha's appearance at his side, and at Julian's, was something more than sudden. There was no warning—just her presence.

"Aren't you coming to supper, dear? And you, Cousin Martin?" And Martha, to Zari—"Oh, don't go! Won't you join us at our table? I should so like the chance to tell you how much I enjoyed your performance."

Zari came back. "You are most kind, but I—" She made as if to leave again, but there must have been something in Julian's face, or in Martha's, that held her. "Julian," she said, "I do not think I know the name of this most gracious lady. Your sister, perhaps?"

"I'm Mrs. Lyndendaal," said Martha, "Julian's wife. It seems you are old friends." Martha was smiling. There was some moment there when the smile became set—some gleam of the truth, it might have been.

"Oh—so you have got yourself married, Julian! I didn't know—"

Julian contributed a totally inadequate remark: "It was in the papers."

"I doubt if Mme. Zari reads the papers very much," Martin said. He said it to use the name, so Martha would know, without any doubt.

She would have to know now, as long as she was facing her. And then he couldn't remember whether the woman's name had ever been brought to Martha's attention. He wasn't sure. But whether it had or not, she knew who Zari was. You could tell that by her face, and the smile still unrelaxed from the setting, and the way her happiness and her peace and her security were taken from her in a sort of violence, as a thief might have torn the little string of pearls from her proud throat. It was horrible to Martin, seeing her

so. He should have been able to prevent such a thing from happening.

Her pride remained, and her strength. She faced Zari without any flinching, and Julian too, who must have been harder for her to face than the woman was. Because Julian wasn't rising to the situation of which he should at least have attempted to be master. He was like something trapped, who couldn't escape. He was neither proud nor strong. As for Martin himself, he would have been strong enough to strangle Zari, and possibly strangle Julian, if any good could have been served by such an act.

"I am so glad he married you," said Zari to Martha, "you must make such a wonderful mother for the boy."

"What boy?" said Julian. "We have no boy."

"But yes! The little boy your father took. And now you are married, it is such a good arrangement. You will be able to care for him so nicely. You know, Julian—your son. Don't tell me you didn't know you had a son!" Laughter engulfed Zari. She threw back her handsome head and gave herself over to it.

But Martha topped her. "I saw no occasion for his knowing it," she said. "Come, Julian—"

Zari watched Julian being led away. "She is what you call, something—that one. And now, Mr. Lyn-den-daal, I will speak to Ivan."

"I will go with you." Martin drew her arm through his own, and together they walked towards the stage, thus increasing the distance between themselves and the other pair, who had gone into the cloak room.

There were two specific things which Martin didn't like. Two things which, in the field of minor irritations, were para-

mount. One was a man considerably bigger than himself—physically bigger. There were a number of men whom he knew, and got along with, who were approximately his own size. That was all right. But any man who topped him by inches, and outmeasured and outweighed him, seemed to Martin to be taking up too much space. It upset his sense of what was fitting—it approached the abnormal. This Ivan, who ran the Russian troupe, was of such a build. The other dislike Martin owned to, was a cheap hotel—a shoddy caravansary. The place the Russians lived in was such a one. So that made these two things in one night—as if he didn't have enough to his distaste then without them.

Ivan was enormous, and with his great boots and his great beard, and his hands like hams, and his voice like a voice coming from a megaphone, it was difficult for Martin to negotiate with him at all. But negotiations with Ivan were the only chance he had now, because you could see that Zari alone couldn't be trusted. She hadn't been able to resist telling Julian about the boy, and Martin would have to fight both for him and for Martha. She had overstepped herself, and Martin pressed this advantage. He could, legally, cut off her income. But in such case he would have over her no further check. Instead, he would transfer from her to Ivan the price of her silence. If this silence were again broken, or if she saw Julian, all revenue would cease. Naturally, Ivan was his ally. Zari had no chance against the two of them. So it didn't matter that the man was someone whom, ordinarily, Martin would have avoided—except possibly to have given him a job in the mills in the early days when human strength counted for more than the calculated horse power of machines.

Martin's first thought it had been to ship Zari off somewhere—get her out of the way on some pretext or other. But Ivan was better. One of the secrets of Martin's success was his good judgment in deputing authority to others. If

Julian made any attempt to see Zari again . . . Martin smiled to himself, thinking how his son would get rather the worst of it. That was almost a promise on Ivan's part. Any carrying out of the promise would, Martin knew, combine business with pleasure.

Martin gave the devil his full due. He even parted with the powers of darkness, in their satanic and undusted depths, with mutual expressions of esteem. He had been with them possibly an hour. The room they shared was never, you felt, wiped clean of the successive accumulations of transient occupancies. Zari should have done better for herself with the resources at her command. And yet Martin felt that he had underestimated her. If she had possessed one thing more—one little filament or thread to bind and hold back the spreading coarseness—such a woman might have reached to something approaching the great of her profession. Not her first profession, but that which she was learning, evidently at some sacrifice.

Martin returned to his daughter's party, after this wholly distasteful interlude, to find it still in full swing, and other performers—not Russians—carrying on the entertainment to which the barbarians had given such a head start. There was a form of music called jazz which had come into vogue during the war. It kept the nerves in a state of suspension. You would be led to expect a certain beat, a certain emphasis, and then the beat and emphasis would fall differently, bringing you back, always, to the time from which you started, through a sort of unrelated rhythm which kept its pace. And sometimes, when you counted on a harmony, a discord would come instead. There was an instrument which had a moaning screech to it, as if it were in pain. Brass sounded like brass, and became something more than the alloy from which a horn could be fashioned.

"Too bad Martha and Julian had to leave so early," Fanny said. "They slipped away, and Martha left a message—they

have to get to their bakery place so early. You seemed to take quite a fancy to that Mme. Zari, you old reprobate! What did you do—take her for a drive in the Park?"

Several people had noted Martin's absence with Zari, and he was forced to assure them of the additional company of Ivan. They didn't wholly believe the assurance, but they accepted it. Not that it mattered to Martin. Here in this big gay room, in the midst of the music and the chatter, he kept wondering if Julian and Martha had arrived home in safety. Why shouldn't they? Julian was a skilful and cautious driver. But there were obstacles—El pillars, obstructions, some of them of steel—into which a driver, the more expert the better, could head swiftly and surely. Accidents could and did occur with a frequency which made them pass without question. At last, Martin went to a telephone extension in one of the bedrooms and called the apartment. Martha's voice warmly, if monosyllabically, came over the wire.

"Yes?"

"Are you all right, Martha?"

"Yes."

"Please don't worry about anything—it's all settled."

"Thanks." And the click of the instrument back to its hook.

Later, driving home with Sarah, with the dawn paling the sky, Martin realized that he was very tired. Sarah was inclined to chat. You could take it as purely coincidental that she mentioned the boy.

"Oh, how's the little boy, Father, the one Mrs. Christian-sen's looking after?"

"Odd you should ask about him," said Martin, "because that Mme. Zari, who was in the Russian troupe, happens to be his mother." Sarah was a woman a man could talk to, and Martin had need of talk—great need.

"I always wondered who the mother was," Sarah answered, after a pause.

"I suppose you think you know the father?"

"Well, I have my ideas, of course. Not that I blame you—or think it's any of my business—"

"I'm not the father, if that's what you mean."

Sarah turned. "You forget that I've seen the boy!"

"Children sometimes look like their grandparents."

Martin could sense Sarah's astonishment, though the light within the car was insufficient to afford him a view of it.

"You mean—"

"Julian."

"It would have to be Julian. I'm quite sure it's not Fanny, and it certainly isn't I. Does Martha know?"

"Yes."

"She knew—before she was married?"

"Yes. But Julian found out only to-night."

"Who told him?"

"Zari."

"I took a most hearty dislike to Zari," Sarah said.

"So would any woman."

"I'm surprised Fanny had her in her house."

But Fanny could hardly be held responsible, they both agreed, for the personnel of the Russian troupe. And then Martin told Sarah the whole story, including this most recent chapter. The brief drive wasn't long enough to contain it, so he came to her sitting room and sat in one of her brocaded chairs, and she on a lower chair beside him. While he talked, she laid her hand in his. The touch of it, soft and smooth as it was, made part of his fatigue slip from him until what remained was not too much to be borne. He slept through what little was left of the time for sleep, and later that morning it was so much like other mornings that the night was hard to credit.

There was Eric, drawing back the curtains, shutting the windows, turning on the cock which let steam into the radiator.

"How's the weather, Eric?"

"Very pleasant, sir, and we don't often have good weather at this season."

"Don't we, Eric, at this season?" It was good to be able to speak Danish with Eric. There were so few people with whom Martin could do that. "I'm afraid I no longer notice weather very much."

"You have a great deal on your mind, sir. It's more than human flesh can bear." What did Eric know about what Martin had on his mind?

Martin lay there for a moment, watching the servant busying himself about the room—putting out fresh linen—picking up the things which had been discarded the night before. And then he sat up in bed and threw the covers off, and put one foot to the floor and into a waiting slipper. Then the other into its mate. He stood up. He had recently decided that the old-fashioned nightshirt was, for him, easier and more comfortable than pyjamas. Catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror, he rather regretted this decision. In the unflattering, loose-hung garment, he looked enormous—almost as big as the mighty Ivan. He went into the bathroom. The sharp needles of the shower were good on his body. He could feel the blood running through him. And as he lay, presently, on the long rubbing table, with Eric working over his muscles, he felt more and more competent to handle any situation which last night might have brewed.

"A little firmer about the neck, my boy—there. Why did you think I had a great deal on my mind?"

"It's just that you do too much, sir—"

"You mean, I attempt too much. One never does too much."

Now Eric was beating a tattoo with the heels of his hands all the way down one great thigh. "It's the same thing, sir, and harder on the system."

"Meaning that an attempt is a failure?"

"Something like that."

"Well, Eric, I don't look for failure."

"You don't have to tell me that, sir!"

He didn't have to tell Eric anything—in fact he couldn't tell him all this "great deal" which was on his mind. From Zari, Julian was reasonably safe, for the time being at least. Martin wondered if the boy was as safe from Julian, now that Julian knew there was a boy. A most exceptional child, the boy was, for whom Martin had great plans, and he didn't want the present arrangements changed in any way. Next year school would start—public school in Brooklyn. It would have been good for Julian to have gone to a school like that when he was little. No nonsense. Julian couldn't interfere. After all, the boy was legally Martin's. He must decide on a name for him—a first name. He mustn't forget, the next time he saw Anna. And what was that other thing the boy must have? Oh, he remembered—he had asked for a dog. Anna had said a dog would be a nuisance, so Martin had let it pass, but now he thought a dog would be a protection, if nothing more. And besides, it would teach the child kindness and consideration. Zari's son could do with a little training in such a direction.

"How do you go about getting a dog, Eric?"

"A dog? Well, sir, let me see—"

Eric saw. It seemed to Martin that he was still seeing. Eric's present dog, Adolphus, was the grandson of the animal which he had been deputed to obtain for the little boy. The stretch of years between the morning when the subject of dogs had first been broached, and this present moment when the barking of Adolphus III was plainly audible across the street, was a space of time best to be connoted by three generations of dogs. Then Martin was very much in the midst of life, with a great deal on his mind, and much to be accomplished. Now, life had stepped a little to one side, and what he had on his mind was merely a dead weight which he must carry, and

there was nothing to be accomplished. But Adolphus III barked across the street, in fine canine eagerness to retrieve the stick which Eric threw for him. Straight along the packed earth path which edged the Park wall, back with the stick in his mouth, and then a leap in the air for joy, and a second of frozen stillness—standing as straight and as firm as he ever could be demanded to do in a show ring—so the great police dog had his game. Martin knew, without hearing it, what Eric would be saying—"You think you're a puppy, Dolphus, or one of these little snapping terriers—you forget that you have in your veins the blood of soldiers—" Eric stopped to attach the leash to the collar, and the pair made their way to this side of the avenue, and were soon out of sight around the corner to the service entrance.

It had been characteristic of Eric, when told to find a dog fulfilling certain specifications, to comb the field and bring back the finest specimen obtainable, which the grandsire of Adolphus surely was. The boy and Anna would be safe in his charge.

"First you bring a child to me," Anna had said to Martin, "and now you bring this! I shall be expecting an elephant any day. But I warn you, I know nothing of the care of elephants. Be gentle, Barn, and do not pull his coat! There—he knocked you down. He will teach you manners—which is more than I have been able to do—"

Poor Anna—she had her troubles. And now they must get to the matter of the name.

"What would you like for your first name?" Martin asked the boy. "Barn is just for babies."

"I should like to be called Martin, like you."

"But there might be another little boy some day called Martin, and then that would not do."

It seemed that Anna had had an uncle named Matthew—a fine man, tall and strong, and a good worker. It was decided as simply as that. Martin, Martha and Matthew.

"And what will we call him?" the boy asked, pointing to the dog.

"Oh—that reminds me—" Martin produced some papers—"These are his registry papers, showing his breed and all—save them carefully, Anna. His name, by these, is Gustavus Adolphus Rex."

"Why should the poor beast be named for a Swedish king?" Anna criticised. "Why not a good Danish king, like Christian?"

"You could hardly call a dog Christian!"

"I guess he's as Christian as anyone around this place!" Anna was always one to speak her mind.

"I think we'll call him Gus," said Matthew. "Here, Gus—" The dog crossed to him, wagging his tail. "And now you must all remember to call me Matthew—Matthew Lyn-den-daal."

"Don't say it so," said Martin, "say it quickly—Lynden-daal—"

"Lyndendaal—"

So here was the dog, and here was the name. It was these smaller details, which could be ordered by a word, which gave you a false sense of smooth progress, like the arrangements made by Eric for the dog's care and health—the man whom he found to go over every day to Brooklyn and take him for a long run. The handling of such matters was a drug you had, to ease your dread.

It hadn't been entirely good for Martin, seeing the happiness in Martha's face. But seeing that happiness wiped away was less good. And she wouldn't talk to him about it. She worked at her business with a sort of set fury. Before her fury was consumed, CRUMPLE CAKES would cover the earth. And Julian seemed still to be working. Martin was reminded of a wrecked store front which had a sign outside—Business as Usual. He tried to tell himself—and almost believed it—that nothing could be wrong. There was no

dynamite keg on which anyone sat, there was no time bomb set, no great engulfing wave coming in. If Martha were no longer joyous, joy was brief and perfect love was fleeting. Martin's cancelled checks came back from the bank, endorsed by the Russian in due course. The troupe had obtained some vaudeville bookings on the road. Zari was undoubtedly with them.

There was another thing on Martin's mind during these days—his wife's health. Not that Frances played the invalid, or permitted her condition to inconvenience her family. But it became increasingly apparent that she wasn't well. For a long time—too long—Martin had merely received the impression that she was over-tired. She went to Florida. Everyone went to Florida to avoid the storms of winter, so this in itself meant nothing. If she'd been a good sailor she could have taken a cruise on the yacht. But she had never been a good sailor and the mere thought of the yacht made her rather less well than usual. She wasn't so young any more, she told Martin. That was it. She looked young, but she wasn't. She had never been really strong, and a woman of her age had need of strength to carry her through.

"You mean," said Martin, "that you don't expect to be carried through?"

"Why, of course—what an idea! But not as easily as I might."

It was the indirectness of the warning that made him frightened. And he was frank enough with himself to be surprised at his concern. He'd seen so little of Frances for such a long time . . .

"Have you been to doctors?"

"Yes."

"What do they say?"

"What do doctors always say? At first, nothing. But that wouldn't do. They're bound to say something—sooner or later."

"And your case was no exception?"

"None." Frances paused. "It's something about the heart—it has a long name."

"Doctors—bah!" And then Martin used a Danish word—*markskriger*—which meant charlatan. He didn't really think that about doctors, but he felt the lie justified.

"I must rest a great deal," Frances went on, "and have complete absence from worry. The rest can be easily managed—the worry is not so easy."

"Is it Julian? I thought Julian was settled."

"I thought so, too, though not quite as I could have wished. But now something's wrong, and I don't know what it is. He came to me for money the other day. He hasn't asked me for money in a long time."

"He's making a fairly good income," said Martin.

"Yes, and they live modestly. What could it be for?"

"What did he say it was for?"

"To pay a gambling debt. But Julian doesn't gamble. Oh, a few dollars in a bridge game, perhaps. He's not a very good bridge player."

"Did you give him this money?"

"Yes—he seemed so upset—"

"Do me a favor," said Martin. "Don't give him any more!" He must have spoken with an emphasis he hadn't meant to use, because a shade of surprise passed over Frances.

"He has a funny sense that the money he makes selling his wife's cakes isn't his to spend as he likes," she justified herself.

"You're not responsible for his funny senses—"

Why had the matter of Julian come up? Why had he mentioned him, in the first place? He couldn't be altogether sorry, as he'd learned something, but it would have been pleasant to have sat here with Frances, with nothing but affection and friendliness between them. That was selfish. The doctors said she must not have worries. Well, she had presented the chief one to him.

"I wouldn't give Julian's troubles another thought," Martin said.

He crossed over to where she sat, and bent down and kissed her cheek, which was colder than a woman's cheek should be. He noted that, and remembered suddenly that he had had no reason to note such a thing about her in a long time.

She smiled up at him. "You will find out about Julian, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll find out."

"You see, Julian doesn't take me into his confidence any more."

He never had—not really. And Frances knew nothing of the Russian—nothing of Zari's present incarnation—at least Martin doubted if anyone had told her. Martin had thought the company away. He learned very quickly that they had returned. Martin could and would take steps which would never have occurred to Frances. It would have been totally uncharacteristic of her to have faced the mighty Ivan down—getting suspiciously nowhere—and to put detectives on Julian's trail, learning from this espionage that the young man had hired under an assumed name a room in a rooming house of doubtful character. The use to which he put this precious sanctuary was easy to discover. Zari must be very sure of herself, to risk such meetings.

At first, Julian denied the whole thing. But he couldn't go on denying it—not with the proof his father had for him. And then he said—with a certain surface logic—that what he did was none of his father's business.

"And Martha?"

"I can't see how what Martha doesn't know can hurt her."

"How long do you think she'll go on not knowing?"

"That's up to you, isn't it?"

"I see no reason for protecting you—"

"You wouldn't be protecting me—you'd be protecting her."

You'd probably do that, crazy about her as you've always been."

This was no moment to argue such a point. It wasn't one you could argue—it would make too much of it—making it seem true.

"You act," Julian went on, "as if I were a twelve-year-old who couldn't be trusted out alone. Besides, I don't think you're the one to talk. I wouldn't call you exactly the example of the faithful husband."

Martin had never set himself up as such an example, and he certainly wasn't going into any justification which he might have had, and Julian didn't have.

"Martha knew about Zari," Julian said. "She knew all about her. And she knew about this boy—which was more than I knew, and more than either she or you saw fit to tell me. Oh, you needn't worry about him—Zari doesn't want him. You've adopted him, haven't you—legally? Everyone thinks he's yours, and they can go right on thinking so, for all of me. You can have him, lock, stock and barrel. Besides, if you want to clean up your precious family, why don't you start nearer home? The Countess Mattiabelli is a relative of yours, too—and lives under your roof—and you support her. Very handsomely, too. That gives you a certain right—"

"I think we might leave Sarah out of this—"

"The difference between her and me is that Sarah gets around you—she knows what side her bread is buttered on—I don't—I never have—"

"It's not such a bad thing to know," Martin told him. "And there's another difference. Your sister, Sarah, is a free woman. What she does, as long as she doesn't involve herself—and us—in open scandal, is to an extent her own business. She has a certain judgment which you lack—a judgment in people."

"Sure, her marriage showed that."

"Her marriage was probably a lesson to her."

"Lesson One. She's had some others since. I'll bet, if you put detectives on her trail—oh, I don't say, now—she seems to have toned down a good deal lately. Maybe she's thinking of marrying again some day?" Julian put it as a question. His concern with his sister was, Martin suspected, a herring drawn across the track of his own crime, but Martin answered him to the effect that he hoped Sarah would do just that—provided, of course, she chose wisely.

"You and she might not see eye to eye on it—oh, well, you don't have to worry—not for another year, anyway."

Martin wondered why Julian could set the date, even so approximately close, and said so. Julian was displaying a shrewdness and a logic of which he hadn't known him possessed.

"Well," Julian went on, "I fancy it'll take a year for Morris Silverton to be making enough money so he'll feel he can afford a wife like Sarah—that is to say, if Sarah'd be willing to do without a good many things she has now. I can see you don't know about it."

Martin's not knowing was like a point scored. Julian had made a strike, a hit, he'd put his father in the wrong. The thing Martin didn't understand, either then or at the present time when he was thinking about it, was why he had been so ready to accept Julian's news at its face value. It was easy enough to credit, in so far as it concerned Silverton. The financial man of CRUMPLE CAKES was not alone in his admiration. Sarah had plenty of men chasing after her, with intentions, so Martin gathered, embracing all degrees of honor and the reverse—this according to the condition, pattern and habit of life of the individual. Silverton would undoubtedly have marriage in view. He was the marrying kind—most Jews were. They were orderly people, the best of them, and having wandered the face of the earth, they liked to settle down. But that Sarah should be considering the thing was harder to ac-

cept. Yet Martin had accepted it, at once, his only objection being that he himself hadn't known.

But all this was a long way from Zari Hanajos, even a long way from Martha. Martin returned to these with a conscious effort. He must do his best to make Julian understand the situation. In this, there was one thing to help. It was something else he hadn't known. Julian had changed, more than on the surface, and this change must be laid solely at Martha's door.

"Your wife's done so much for you, Julian, you owe her rather more than most men do their wives. In fact, she's come damn' close to making a man of you."

"You wouldn't have thought it was possible, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't. Therefore, as she's done this, against all likelihood, she's entitled to the best in you."

"And I'm not entitled to the best in her?"

"Why, surely you are—I don't understand—"

"You wouldn't. You're not married to her. I am—have been for two years. I know what she's done for me—you don't have to rub it in. And if she wasn't the kind of person she is, she probably couldn't have done it. But I don't come first with her—I never have—I've always been the second name on the list."

"And the first name?"

It had ever been a horrible moment for Martin to remember, that moment while he awaited Julian's verification of the name Martin thought he knew. It was a moment big with his own fatuous vainglory. He wanted to be sure—it seemed to him he had never wanted anything so much.

"I hope you know what you're saying," he added.

Julian looked at him. "Why of course I know what I'm saying! It's not a name, really. It's what the psychologists call an abstraction. It's success—her own success. That comes first with Martha, and it always will."

Martin laughed, he didn't know why. Neither did Julian.

"What's so funny about it?" Julian asked.

"Nothing—nothing at all." No, it made nothing to laugh about, to find that the first name, for Martha, was not a name.

"I'm a weakness," Julian elucidated further, "—a diversion of the warrior."

Martin pulled himself together. "You resent that?"

"Wouldn't you?"

"No," said Martin, "I don't think so. Under the circumstances, I don't think I should resent anything. After all, Martha's success is something she's paid for in the coin of her labor. She's entitled to it."

"She's also paid for it," Julian continued, "in the incompleteness of her relations with people. She's a house divided against itself—she serves two masters—and a woman shouldn't have to do that."

"Oh, my God!" said Martin. "Are you so ridden by sex that you can't think of people as human beings instead of just men and women—male and female?"

"Male and female created He them—"

"The world wouldn't get very far if that's all they were. It's only the lower animals—the very lower—that die when they propagate."

"Where did you gather that choice little item?"

"Back in school in Odense. It was a pretty good school, Julian—better than you ever went to. Or perhaps it was that you spent too much time getting kicked out."

"I couldn't concentrate on study?"

It occurred to Martin that this was a pity. It wasn't that any schoolbook learning would have been directly useful to the boy, but the mere habit of work—early gained—might have hastened this development in him which, otherwise, had been left wholly to Martha, and therefore come a little late. It was ironic, considering the occasion, the comparative friendliness of this talk Martin and Julian were having. Such talks between them were so rare.

"I suppose you haven't saved any money," Martin said suddenly.

"Why, no, how could I?"

"And now, with the demands of Mme. Zari, your chance to save is even less likely. I wish I knew what she had in view."

"What would she have in view?"

"I say, I wish I knew. She couldn't have expected her meetings with you to remain secret forever, and then the income this Russian gets is stopped. He'll throw her out—perhaps he has already—"

"No, but I can tell you, he hasn't lived up to his part of the bargain—he's held out on her—part of the money, I mean—"

"I see," said Martin, "she doesn't risk so much then, in meeting you. But your wife might take certain steps—not only personal, but in a business way. She might think you no longer a very reliable employee for CRUMPLE CAKES."

"I've been thinking that myself," said Julian.

Martin had been surprised more than once in the past half hour, but in this final revelation Julian had exposed more than he had intended.

"Are you again tempted," Martin asked, "to turn thief? When you stole that thousand dollars from the old man's trunk, it was a sum which solved everything. It wouldn't solve so much now, but your connection with CRUMPLE CAKES would widen your opportunities. Would that be what Zari expects of you?"

"I don't know what she expects," Julian answered. "I know only that when I'm with her, nothing else matters."

"I was afraid that's how things were."

Julian must have been hard put to it, to make a confidant of his father. He must have realized how much he'd said, because he now retreated behind the mask of the character which Martin had always known him by.

"I suppose you'd like me to lose my job! Because, if that happened, and I had no other way of getting money, you think Zari would be through with me, and all would be forgiven, and that would settle everything! Well—don't you try to fire me! You have no right—you have no say in the business, in spite of the money you've put up for it!"

Martin saw fit to ignore this outburst. "If you're unhappy about this woman, as I suspect you are, in spite of the hold she has on you, you can get away from her—it's not too late—"

"You mean, you could. You could get away from anything—get out and land on your feet. For the rest of us it's not so easy."

"You'll have to decide what you want to do."

These were Martin's final words to his son then, though, even as he said them, he was aware that this was the weakness in Julian. He was incapable of making any decision whatever.

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Out of this talk there came a strange realization to Martin. He saw himself in a new light. He had never thought of himself before as being the kind of man he had obviously become—respectable—conservative—the backbone of the country. It was other people—not himself—who became involved in scandals, who were unrighteous and eager, who didn't know upon which side their bread was buttered. Or—if they did—used the knowledge sometimes for unworthy ends. Age, with its caution and its wisdom, and its weariness perhaps, had broken through the last vestige of Martin's youth. It wasn't that he was afraid, but—for himself—he had no further use for danger. Danger was said to have a bright face—too bright—like Zari's face. Zari was a creature of the more blatant allurements. It was natural that by

these he should be no longer dazzled. Martin was very grateful to Martha, that she still could dazzle him, and Martha made no attempt to be alluring—no attempt whatever. She was merely caught full in the roaring stream which these young people called living.

They were all so avid about it. Matthew's dog, guzzling his dinner, presented no less anxious a spectacle. Experience was one thing, and being willing to take a risk if the odds were at least even, and facing such risk with a degree of fortitude. But all this rashness for its own sake was a quality of action with which Martin had come to have little patience. And, if rashness failed them, or led them astray, these young ones worked the failure out in further jeopardies. Life with them was an endless series of experiments. In greater or less degree, they were all tarred with the brush of recklessness which had come sweeping over the world after the war. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may . . .

There would be thorns found in such quick gathering. To watch it, gave Martin a little the sense of being in an elevator which was dropping. But it was he who dropped, not they. It wasn't even Martha, who was pursuing her success with a sort of set fury—a deliberate and considered recklessness. She sold some of the investments, in which she had temporarily placed part of Martin's money, and bought out baking plants here and there. She took an option of some property near Philadelphia which she regarded as a desirable factory site. Why should the cakes be localized because they must be eaten fresh? She was also spending a good deal of money on advertising. But it annoyed her that there could be, as yet, no national campaign, that you couldn't pick up a copy of the Saturday Evening Post, or one of the big women's magazines, and see a full page in color setting forth the beauty and merit of her product. There was much to be done before any such moment arrived, Martin told her. Yes, she agreed, there was much to

be done. But she and Morris Silverton, between them, were capable of doing it. Give them time. Time was what Martin urged, beyond all things.

Martha told Martin, in detail, what she thought of Morris Silverton. She was shot with luck, she said, to have discovered him. It was so rare to find anyone with whom you could work—really work. Yes, it was true, he was interested in Sarah—what man wasn't? As to how Sarah felt, Martha wasn't sure. Sarah might hesitate to marry again. Marriage was—well—not always to be recommended. Which was as near as Martha came to mention of Julian. That was what these young people did—they shut the door in your face—they told you only what they wished to tell you, which was never much.

The period with which Martin was now concerned was not long in years, but possessed its own peculiar temper to divide it from other periods. And he was not a part of it in the same way that he had been a part of the periods preceding. His age cut him off. His age might have done that, no matter what the temper of the times, but not as much. Those years, those nineteen-twenties, were confused and seething. They were like steam at a pressure just sufficient to appear as such, and befog the air, but not raised to a point of usefulness and movement—no swift, straight rushing jet. While Martin, at this time, could truthfully say of himself that he had begun to approach a certain clarity. It might be the flash of light before the darkness, but it was there. And meanwhile, his cousin, his daughter-in-law, the woman he loved—all one and the same—all Martha Christiansen, who was also named Lyndendaal—was in serious trouble, and what could Martin do to get her out of it? His son had said that he could get out of anything—he, Martin, could get out. But that was for himself, not for other people.

Martin could do the one obvious thing—stop the money

he'd been sending to the Russian, and not be too concerned about how Zari would get along without even the fraction of it which Julian said she had been given. And, as long as money was no longer in question, Martin really had no cause to pry into Julian's personal affairs. It was as if a snow plow had come along and cleared a wide white road down which Martin must walk alone. But steel was still steel. He must never lose his grip on that, or seem to lose it. Spectacular success had become a habit with Martin—a habit of which he had no wish to be rid. So he went on somewhat blindly, giving his attention to his work and taking care of the details of all his concerns. He had his steel and he had his grandson. And he had Frances.

Steel was everything that it should be. This boy, Matthew by name, was all and more than he had hoped. His relation with Frances was closer than it had been in a long time. Martin should have been at least reasonably content. That he wasn't, was base ingratitude to the Fates. It was unreasonable that he should have felt a frustration then which at the present time, with so much less to have, he no longer felt. It might have been that there was still within him then the material of struggle, and now there wasn't. He felt as he did at that time, not alone because of Martha, or because of any one circumstance. It was something in himself. The whole taste of life had gone a little dry in his mouth suddenly.

Perhaps that was why he got on so well with Frances. He suspected that life had always tasted dry to her, and he had caught up with her. He was very much concerned about Frances. The specialists gave her trouble a long name—*Vegetative Endocarditis*—and said that nothing could be done that wasn't being done. Frances lay on a couch for most of that summer. The summer of 1924, it was. The balcony harboring the couch had a gay striped awning and a view of the ocean. Martin made the long trip to New-

port whenever he could. Frances was a very delightful companion when there was no thought of love, or resentment at its lack. She had a good quick brain, and often things to say which were worth listening to. She was controlled in the midst of an uncontrolled world. No seething, no confusion, everything orderly. She belonged, not to the nineteen-twenties, but to a period with which Martin was far more familiar. And she was a very handsome woman still, despite the mild ravages of her illness, which showed only now and then.

There was a French slang term, popular at the present time—*chichi*. As much as it meant anything, it meant the little luxurious touches to a person or an environment, an unexpected jewel, the lace border of a handkerchief, the little bowl of flowers on a breakfast tray. Frances was surrounded by much *chichi*. Not that Martin saw his wife at breakfast. He never saw her until her maid and her nurse had prepared her for the passing of another day. And then it would seem that just these two, Frances and Martin, had this fine house to themselves. This wasn't true. Sarah was there most of the time, and the little Sylvia, and assorted domestics. But the house could swallow such a sparse filling. There were few guests that summer, save a friend or so of Sarah's. And such never penetrated to this balcony, which was as secluded and as inviolable as the aerie of an eagle on the side of a cliff. And Martin was the king eagle, who had provided this haven for his mate.

He had provided so much. He it was who had been so generous that Frances had accumulated quite a sizable fortune of her own, to do with as she pleased. This had not been an unalloyed generosity on Martin's part. There had been times in his career when it had been wiser to place property in his wife's name. But her possession of it pleased him somehow, and he had never permitted its return. It was hers. Her advice had been worth that, many times over.

He had heard vaguely, though he never pursued the subject, that she was clever about her investments. He could well believe it. People had always envied him for Frances. There was Charlie Rosch, who did rather more than envy him. Which was a curious thing, and something he'd never suspected through all the years. Not that there was anything to suspect. But there might have been, if Frances had been ever so little different from the way she was.

The doctors did not encourage callers, but Rosch was an old friend. He had built himself a house at Narragansett. Newport, he had sense enough to know, was not quite for such as he. There would be ramparts there he could not scale—neither he nor his wife. At the lesser resort, this was not the case. So one afternoon when Martin arrived—a hot Saturday, it had been, and the balcony contained the only breeze he had encountered—he found Rosch's cabin cruiser riding at anchor offshore, and Rosch himself occupying one of the wicker lounge chairs. The man was actually drinking tea—a sight Martin had never expected to see—and making rapid inroads on a large slice of chocolate cake. That was when Rosch voiced his envy, when he rose to go:

"I envy you like hell—"

He stood there in the doorway leading back into the house. He was a fine upstanding figure, considering his age, though rather distorted by the peculiar nether garments he wore. These were a type of knickerbocker popular at that time, known as Plus Fours, which buckled in their fulness well down on the calf, and were designed to become those of more spare and British lines. Martin remembered thinking it was just what Charlie Rosch would pick out.

He was rather surprised at Rosch's statement, and said so to Frances when Rosch had gone. "Why should he envy me? He's been more successful than I have."

"I don't think he was speaking of that."

"Well, he has a finer house than this one. Twenty bath-

rooms, I heard he put in, over there across the bay, while we have only—”

“Nine,” said Frances. “But that would be a strange measure of success in life! He feels perhaps, that outside of the bathrooms, you’ve done better. He told me this afternoon that his great error was in having been in too much of a hurry.”

“About what?”

“Possibly about getting married.”

“Funny time to talk about it, after all these years!”

“He may have felt that the years have made it a less dangerous topic.”

“He may—”

“He married when he was very young,” Frances went on, “more or less at the instigation of Mr. Carnegie, I think it was—one of those men. For him, at that time, it was a decidedly brilliant marriage. His wife’s people were well-to-do and well thought of—”

“And well fed, I’ll lay!”

Martin and Frances both laughed. Mrs. Rosch was tremendously fat. She was a placid woman who moved with difficulty. There was plenty of space, however, for diamonds, to which she was very partial.

“I don’t see how Charlie can kick about his marriage,” Martin defended her. “He’s gone his own gait, I’m sure, and he always did like ’em fat. She must have been a comfort, too. The Pittsburgh winters used to get pretty cold at night. He’s stuck. He didn’t have to. He could have got almost any woman. And she couldn’t have stopped him. She couldn’t have run fast enough to stop him.”

“Most men of Rosch’s generation stick. It doesn’t occur to them not to. It’s a ‘for better, for worse’ proposition with them—till—” Frances hesitated.

“Till death do us part?” asked Martin. It came to him, that he shouldn’t have said that.

It was a direct question which in some way concerned themselves, and they had been talking, not about themselves, but about Rosch. It was given to some people, a power of sight to see this and that—to see death in a person's face, for example. With the pronouncement of the dread word, Martin—looking almost casually at his wife—suddenly saw it in hers. He had been worried about her, but merely because she was ill. He had never thought before that she would die. But now, there it was.

Not in any extreme of agony or pallor, nor in violence, nor in brooding shadow, did Martin see death then. Certainly there was no mask of horror, no hooded figure. Frances was smiling. Her little white teeth—as white and as even as ever they had been—were visible beneath her parted lips, which would have appeared thin if they hadn't been so beautifully formed. She had a quality of youth about her this afternoon, false only if you were captious and stared too closely. She looked—Martin had it in a flash—like someone from whom all stress of life had fallen, because life was through, and she lay resting in her coffin. He had been worried about her, but he was unprepared for this. What he saw must not show, must not be reflected to come within her vision. To cover what was in his mind, he went on about Rosch very quickly:

"I'll have to return Rosch's call. I haven't been over there for some time. I'll give him a ring to-morrow."

"Why don't you? You could take the *Dannebrog*—you haven't had much use of her lately."

"I haven't had time to use her."

"No, you've given your time to me. You've been very kind, Martin."

"Getting old, I guess," he deprecated.

"Oh, you mustn't say that, because it makes me realize I'm getting old, too!"

"Never. You'll be eternally young." And this wasn't what

he ought to have said, either, under the circumstances.

Frances made him promise to telephone Rosch—which he did, and arranged to go over to Narragansett the next day. Perhaps she was tired, perhaps it was a strain having him there the whole of every week-end. Martin arrived at Rosch's very grand in the *Dannebrog's* tender. He'd brought Sylvia and Sylvia's governess with him, just for the trip. They stayed on the yacht. It was a most neighborly and domestic call. The Rosches and their guests were rising, as they best could, from one of those plethoric feasts known as Sunday dinner. Martin had coffee with them on the terrace, and then the two great men wandered off together. Rosch said he wanted to show Martin his kennels—a new development. He was raising—of all things—Pekinese.

"If you're going to have cats," said Martin, "have cats."

"Mrs. Rosch likes them. I rather like them myself. They're so damned useless. But they do look a little like cats. I'd never thought of it."

"They wouldn't look like much of anything if a good self-respecting tomcat got in among 'em!"

Both men laughed, and Rosch urged on Martin one of his cigars. Martin always side-stepped Rosch's cigars, if he could. By the time you were done unwrapping the tinfoil you didn't want to smoke any more.

"Tell me," said Rosch, without any preamble, "is Frances's condition serious?"

"Fairly so, I'm afraid."

"You have the best men, of course?"

"The best men?"

"Doctors—"

"Supposedly the best."

"What does it seem to be?"

Martin was a shade surprised at Rosch's inquiries, which were a bit too specific for mere politeness, but after all Rosch had known Frances for a long time. He had met her,

in fact, at the Lakes', antedating his own meeting with her by just twenty-four hours.

"It's the heart," Martin answered. "There's not very much they know to do."

Rosch had picked up one of the dogs, who, after a brief quiescence, signified its distaste for being held by squirming and growling. Rosch leaned over the steel fence of the runway and replaced the little animal on the ground. From the effort of the movement, his face was flushed.

"I know what I'd do," he said to Martin.

"What?"

"I'd give her my own heart." It wasn't a time for jest. But Rosch wasn't jesting.

"I'm afraid that's hardly a practical operation!"

"So I've discovered—long ago. It's been hers from the first. But you got in ahead of me, and I was ahead of myself. I'm telling you this only because it doesn't matter any more. It never did matter, except to me. It's one of those fool things."

There was no doubt of Martin's surprise. Yet the fool thing explained a great deal. Little things, here and there. And there had been times, Martin knew, when Rosch could have injured him, and forbore. He supposed this was why.

"Don't think there was ever anything," Rosch went on in Martin's silence, "anything—"

"Naturally not."

"Why—I never even kissed her."

"No," said Martin, "I don't fancy you ever did."

Frances didn't belong to the generations that regarded kissing rather more lightly than a pressure of the hand. For that matter, neither did Rosch. The two men walked away from the kennels, obviously deep in a conference kennel boys and chauffeurs—the inhabitants of this part of the grounds—would never disturb.

"So she might have married you instead of me, if you

hadn't been married already." Martin spoke thoughtfully.

"I'd have done my best to make her!"

"I'm sure you would have."

Silence again, and the diminishing sound of the dogs' yapping.

There came a moment when Martin felt the need of further comment: "What a spectacle for Andy and Lake and the rest!"

Rosch laughed. "You and me? That would have been a race for you! They'd have been laying bets."

"I don't know," said Martin. "Andy wasn't much of a betting man. Or was he? You knew him closer than I did."

"Not for the record, he wasn't. But he likely would have regarded that as a sure thing."

Martin felt there were points to be brought forth on both sides of this question, but he let them lie. He walked on for a while, flipping up the gravel of the winding path with the tip of his cane.

"I sometimes think," he spoke at last, "that the only women men like you and me give a damn about are the ones we can't get."

The way Charlie Rosch looked at him, he had the sudden sense of having given himself away on more than one count. But he made no attempt to mend this rent in the cloaking garment of his privacies. After all, Rosch and he understood each other pretty well, and they weren't either of them as young as they once had been.

Less young now. Charlie must be around eighty now, when Martin was thinking about all this. But Charlie still could walk. He might be walking straight into his grave—and not very briskly—but walking was a wonderful thing to be able to do. He could stroll across to Martin's house on Fifth Avenue, from near the East River where his apartment was. The exercise, he said, did him good. He was

just a trifle gloating about his accomplishment, like a small boy who has recently come into possession of a bicycle or roller skates. It was only from Eric—and quite by chance—that Martin learned of the attendant waiting in the hall. Charlie would never have admitted this sign of failing powers—not to Martin, anyway. Eric was on the attendant's side.

"Really, sir," Eric explained, "it wouldn't be at all wise for Mr. Rosch to make those crossings by himself. Some of the streets are quite wide, and by the time you reach the middle, the lights change. Sometimes I think the traffic gets worse in the city every day. I hope you don't think that when you're on your feet again, Mrs. Julian would for a moment permit you—"

Eric must have known perfectly well that Martin would never be on his feet again, and have known, also, that Martin knew it. But it was a polite fiction always carried on between them.

"No, Eric, I suppose if you were to let me go out by myself—and Mrs. Julian heard of it—she'd get hold of Mrs. Silverton, and the pair of them would telephone right to Mrs. Blue in Hollywood. And then there'd be hell to pay—all over the place. I wonder who bosses Mr. Rosch around?"

"Hasn't he a niece, sir?"

"I believe he has—somewhere or other. And then there's that opera singer of his. She's getting kind of along in years herself, and I don't fancy she'd care about losing her meal ticket—as I should regard it as highly uncertain that any provision has been made for her in Mr. Rosch's will."

It shocked Eric, Martin knew, this bringing up of matters you didn't usually discuss with servants. He probably thought Martin wouldn't have done it if he'd been in full possession of his faculties.

PART IV

Martin had once thought that he would like to be buried in Denmark on the little knoll back of the old farm. But now he realized that where he was buried was supremely unimportant. It would be, on his part, the sheerest bravado—a rather unpleasant variety of sickish sentimentality—to make provision that what remained of him should be shipped overseas. Denmark—the whole of Europe, for that matter—had enough on her hands without him. These little neutral countries—it seemed to Martin that they faced impending trouble with averted eyes, as the sensitive might make the rounds of a slaughterhouse. If they could unite in strong alliance—if even the Scandinavian countries could so join . . .

There was trouble brewing between Russia and Finland. Russia was making it—Russia wanted Finland. But Finland wasn't really part of Scandinavia—not racially. Oh, perhaps a bare ten percent! You couldn't expect the better racial strains to sacrifice themselves—or would it be a sacrifice? Martin wasn't close enough to say. And even Denmark, Norway and Sweden were bickering among themselves. Their interests, they felt, were not the same. Squareheads, the Swedes were. Martin had never liked them. But all these countries bordered dangerous seas, upon which battle-ships plied, and beneath which mines were laid. No, outside of this fine room of his, where he sat so safely waiting to die, the world was in a condition Martin didn't pretend to understand. It was, in a larger sense, undoubtedly a condition more important than his own life—or death, either—more important to his children, and to everyone actively

engaged. But not to him. He had done his share with steel. Steel was very strong. Martha was saving it for Matthew. It was said that Matthew was an apt pupil in regard to steel. And it might be that this steel of Matthew's would help to push back the disaster towards which the world seemed to be heading.

It was like a great tide rising, which had been coming on, more and more swiftly, all during this year now so nearly over, and the year before that, and before that. Through the present, it was coming, and on into the future which did not concern Martin. His own life—no matter how little it mattered—was more of a piece than any life the future could possibly hold. He had often thought of it as a series of enterprises, as being divided into periods and eras. But the whole thing joined, somehow. There were threads which were never broken, but held taut and strong throughout. There would never be such threads in any life again. A line was being cut right now, like the division made by a saw in a piece of wood, or scissors through a fabric. The scraping and the snipping—you could at least stop the sound, even if to stop the act were outside any capabilities you had left in you.

You could think of your life in so many ways—as a single link in a chain, perhaps—a chain held fast to an object you could never see. A link in a strong chain—that was what life was—and the chain would still be strong long after you had passed, and the world was rushing to its fate without you. That was immortality. Through his children, and his children's children, Martin had put in his bid for it. Eight human beings, all on earth because of him. And there was Martha, who was not his child. That made nine. He kept including Martha in this cluster of his own seed, falsely. Was this because she had once been Julian's wife? He didn't know. He must know. He must get everything clear in his own mind, now—before the end. Because, after the end

came, looking back, he might come to regard life and death, and the whole world of man, and even this pass into which civilization was entering, as some brief and breaking bubble in the eternal seas. And it rated a better truth than that. So, before his circulatory system became altogether clogged—if that were the medical term, which he wasn't sure it was, such truths were for scientists—he better reach what conclusions he could. Or at least face death humbly, in the conviction of his own ignorance.

November, 1939. November, 1924. Fifteen years ago, exactly, and it seemed just the other day that Frances had been in the room above this one—the same view, the same space, some ten feet higher—also waiting to die. She hadn't taken as long about it as Martin was taking. She had been a good deal younger than Martin was now, and, by that same token, possibly did things more quickly. And her valvular heart was quicker to strike, after it reached a certain state of progression, than was the arterial hardening which was near enough to what he had to make doctors' further explanations inconsequential. He was lucky to be as old as he was, because they thought he couldn't live long, whatever he did. So he was allowed now to do a good deal as he pleased. Up to now, the doctors had been altogether too conscientious about keeping him alive, and from adding his great bulk to that growing press of those who had already taken their departure—those whom he had loved or hated, or been concerned by at one time or another, in some manner, directly or indirectly.

If it wasn't for this damnable disease of his, this thickening and shrinking of the arteries—so that the blood in him had a harder and harder time of it to make its rounds—Martin would have been all right. There was nothing wrong with him, otherwise. His mind was perfectly clear. Even his memory was shaky only about things of the moment. He remembered the past with a sort of dreadful brightness,

like a long series of colored postcards—and not seen exactly, either, but felt—understood. He remembered his own thoughts and how different junctures had affected him, and his ears were always ringing with talk which had been deep-covered with silence.

Yes, the doctors had over-reached themselves a little with their conscientiousness. He might have done as he pleased now even if they hadn't let him—done things to surprise their fine medical wisdom: such as walk about the room, supported, of course, by Eric and the nurse. He wasn't on his feet—you couldn't say that—but his feet were in a straight line beneath him, touching the floor. That almost his entire weight was borne by the two men was nobody's business but his own. He asked for a drink occasionally, and got it, too. A real drink. Not bitter mineral water—not even Scotch and soda, which was an effete beverage enough. He didn't know why, in his own house, he'd put up with it for so long. Good old-fashioned full-bodied Pennsylvania rye—that's what he had now. Just a little—just a finger measure. He suspected that the reason he was permitted to have it was the row he staged if he was denied it. He had had to stage that only once. The row was considered to be more damaging than the liquor, which he couldn't see did him a dime's worth of harm. If he'd seen it did, he would have taken it, just the same.

In a way he wanted to die, and in a way he didn't. Dying—human dying—was such a messy business. There were single-celled organisms, so he had read, which reproduced by a gradual division or cleavage of the body, one individual becoming two, and leaving behind it nothing corresponding to a corpse—no waste or decay or senescence. It was now that he thought of such things—now that he was old. Thank God that Frances had not been old enough to die, thinking of them! Though what Frances thought he never had known. She admitted nothing.

It was characteristic of her that those days, immediately prior to her death, were the very model of what such days should be. There was no spectacle of pain, and certainly no terror. There was a frail and lovely creature lying gracefully, if a little wearily, on a bed with a rose satin coverlet—hardly moving, hardly speaking, and yet somehow quite gay about it. You expected that tea would be served. It never was, not in this room where she lay almost still. But there was a good deal of discreet coming and going. There were Sarah and Fanny and Emily and Tom Fleetwood and Gordon, and Martha—who hadn't come at first, but was summoned. Frances singled Martha out and made her sit near. This surprised all the others, because the impression was general among them that Frances didn't like Martha. There was one peculiar feature in the situation. The sick woman refused to see her son.

"If I saw him," she said, with an air of making everything clear, "I might tell him something, and I don't wish to tell him."

"Naturally—"

"I understand—"

No one understood, or thought it natural, but a sick room was always filled with false assurances and tolerations designed to soothe.

"I'll see him," said Julian's mother, "when I'm ready."

"He'll be waiting," said Martha.

But this was precisely what Julian wasn't, when this readiness finally arrived. His mother asked for him, and her condition was such that it seemed rather important that her requests be granted promptly. This one was impossible to grant promptly, because Julian was nowhere to be found. In justice to him, it should be said that Frances's sinking was sudden. She had stayed at the same level for several weeks, during which she had refused him sight of her. Any exigency was hardly to be predicted. And, not

predicted, it came. And Julian wasn't there. No one knew where he was—not Martha, nor anyone. Martha hadn't known for two days—though this last she admitted only to Martin. In fact, she admitted several things to Martin she might not have admitted, save for the stress. They had brief words in the temporary and limited privacy of a hallway.

"He's thinking of getting out of CRUMPLE CAKES—getting out altogether."

"Oh—is he?" said Martin. "I suspect he's been figuring on doing that for some time."

"Yes, so he said. But why? There's so much opportunity, and he said that was just the trouble—there was too much. And then he spoke of something there wasn't any use in speaking of—that old man's trunk in Pittsburgh—you remember. It seems to be preying on his mind, which is foolish. But he hasn't been himself lately—not since—you know . . ."

"Yes," said Martin, "I know."

"I found out from Silverton," Martha went on, "that he's taken too much money out of his account—his drawing account. But when his commissions are figured it would all be straight."

"We mustn't bother with such things now—"

"Yes, we must find him."

"I'll find him," said Martin.

"Can you?"

"I think so."

Sarah joined them.

"Cousin Martin thinks he can find Julian," Martha told her.

That particular hallway contained a telephone extension. The bell rang. Sarah, being there, answered it.

"Yes, this is Mr. Lyndendaal's house. . . . Oh . . . Yes, it's Sarah. . . . Yes, just a moment, he's right here." She turned to her father—"It's Morris Silverton—he thinks he knows where Julian is. That makes two of you who think

you know. You should be able to do something between you."

Martin's brain, not ordinarily uncommon in its speed, was functioning—not only at an unaccustomed rate, but with that power he possessed now and then to see beneath surfaces. Sarah, with Silverton's assurance still in her ears, gave herself, and her interest in the young man, away completely. It was an inflection and a look, and the light of faith which shone forth.

How Silverton had obtained that address, which was the same one Martin already had, the older man did not have time to inquire. Too much was happening, all at once, to admit speculation on the quality of his omniscience. Silverton produced the information as he always produced anything—at the right moment and only then. He offered his services as emissary. Again an inflection—but it clinched firm his permanent connection with the house of Lynden-daal.

"If I can," said Martin, "I'd rather go with you. Wait."

The doctor said Martin had easily an hour, maybe several. There was nothing he could do in the sick room. The one thing Frances wanted now was Julian. The assurance that Martin would bring him induced in her a calm considered valuable. Martin met Silverton at a subway exit on Forty-second Street. Between them, they found there was little they didn't know about Julian or Zari or possibly anything. Yet they didn't say much, or seem to say much, during that short journey from their meeting point. It would have been shorter, but Martin's big car couldn't make much headway in those cluttered streets, with children playing and pushcarts making the channel narrow and trucks on their way to the warehouses which lined the docks. It was a scene and setting more familiar to Martin, evidently, than it was to his companion, who regarded it through the car window with an obvious distaste.

"I hope to hell he's here!" It was Martin who voiced the hope. Silverton regarded the thing as a certainty.

There was a bell with a knob you pulled out to ring. You could hear the ringing clanging through the house. Slow steps and a woman who would have slammed the door on them if she had dared, and if Martin hadn't had his foot in the doorway.

"The name is Hand," said Silverton.

Hand was the name Julian had used when he'd taken the room first. Rosie Hand was what Zari had called herself back in Pittsburgh.

"Is he in?" Martin asked.

"No, not here."

"Is she in?"

"No. You friends of theirs?"

"Relatives," said Martin.

"We've had a hard time finding them," Silverton explained, "and I know they'll be sorry if you don't let us see them." A bill passed into the woman's open palm.

But her suspicion of them grew as she noted the car at the curb, and their good clothes. She might have noted, too, that they were in the habit of bathing. Upstairs a quarrel—not too raucous—was in progress. The woman went to the stair landing and called—"Shut up!"

"They're here," said Martin, and came in.

Martin, not consciously musical, had an excellent memory for sound. The intonations of a voice rarely escaped him. And these two voices—it would be stretching coincidence too far to have another pair to match them in that one house. Guided by the voices, he and Silverton went to a door on the second floor.

"I tell you, I can't—"

"It would be so very easy—"

"And how long would it last—before it was found out?"

"Not too long. But then we would be gone. And *she*

would do nothing." There was a special emphasis on the *she*—"I am not asking you to do anything that would not be safe for you to do!"

"I can't—"

"You mean, you won't. Without you, I would have little trouble. There are plenty of ways for me to get along. Do you think I like it here? Do you think I could not do better for myself?"

It was as if the walls were paper, Zari's voice came through so plain. Julian's they had to strain to hear.

"We haven't got all day," said Martin. It wasn't that so much—what they were doing wasn't taking all day—but he couldn't stand it any more.

"I'm sorry," Silverton answered. "For a moment I'm afraid I forgot why we were here."

"That's all right." Martin put his knuckles to the door and knocked loudly.

It was opened just a little way, and Julian stood there, blocking it. He saw Martin and Silverton. "What is this—a delegation?"

"Your mother wants to see you."

Julian stepped back. "Is she—"

"No," said Martin, cutting him off. "I said, she wants to see you. She wouldn't want that if she were dead."

"I'll be over as soon as I can."

"Sooner than that," said Silverton. "We'll wait. She isn't expected to live beyond the night."

This was possibly brutal of Silverton. Martin had been brutal, too. Martin had never seen Silverton and Julian together before. It was clear there was no love lost between the two of them. And, in any case, the son of Moses would have little use for a son who treated casually a dying mother's wish.

"You get on back, Mr. Lyndendaal—I'll bring him—"

"I don't question that you will—not in the least—but don't

you think my return without him might have a bad effect on my wife?"

"You're entirely right—I hadn't thought—"

The two worthy members of the social order seemed to exclude Julian from their talk. He might have been a package they were charged to deliver.

"It would take me a few minutes to find a taxi, in this section, if I left the car for you, and if I took the car, you'd be faced with the same trouble—"

Martin was talking, just against time, just so that Julian would be straightened out enough to attend to getting dressed—which he wasn't now—that is to say, he wasn't dressed, which was why they couldn't all start at once. All except Zari, that is, whose presence wasn't asked.

Zari was seated at a table eating a meal, which—in spite of the afternoon hour—appeared to be breakfast. She was doing herself rather well, what with coffee and cream and bread and a large bowl of grapes. Her person was the only clean and cared for object in the cluttered room. The bed had not been made. It might never have been made, from the way it looked, and the dishes in the sink at one end never washed. All this in that short space while Martin and Silver-ton stood in the door talking, at first to Julian, then to each other, Zari not speaking or making any move of greeting. They did their final waiting outside. It wasn't long. They drove with Julian in silence. You could stand just so much—nothing you didn't have to stand.

When they arrived, and Julian's presence was made known, his mother's room was cleared of nurses and doctors and Sarah and Fanny and Emily, and Julian went in alone. Whether Frances told him that which, before, she had not wished to tell him, Martin didn't know—not knowing what this thing might be. It seemed to Martin, those next days passed without his having any conscious knowledge of any sort. The great house was taken over by strangers—or

those who seemed like strangers. And then it was empty. Curiously empty, like a shell from which the mollusk has been pried.

42

The church was banked with lilies. The scent of them was almost as overpowering as the immortal music Chopin had designed for the ceremonial of death. It attained a beat and rhythm as the coffin was carried strongly on the shoulders of its bearers. Martin followed it. He walked as though his legs dragged lead. Sarah walked with him. Behind them, walked Julian and Martha and Fanny and Hazzard Blue, and Fanny's eldest son, and Emily and Tom Fleetwood, and Gordon and his wife, and Jack and old Cousin Henry—up from their horse breeding—and all the others—the house of Lyndendaal and the house of Calverton. Martin could look straight over Sarah's black-swathed head to the sea of faces, right and left of him, turned slightly, straining to watch this cortege of the bereaved, of which he was leader.

In the pews were all the people who felt it their right and duty—their privilege, too—to come to Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal's funeral, all in their various degrees of attachment to her whose weight could add but little to the weight of the finely wrought chest there. And, besides these, were the strangers who had wandered into the big fine church in order to feel themselves participants in a function. It was all of that.

Anna Christiansen was present—Martin saw her—very dignified in her black Sunday clothes. He didn't see Matthew. Anna wouldn't have brought Matthew, it wouldn't have been fitting. Besides, the boy would be in school. He had never known his grandmother. Now he never would—not even in the days to come, when he might learn of the relationship.

Martin sat down heavily in the front pew. There was a pause. The music stopped. A ritual of service began which seemed to go on for a long time. The next thing Martin knew, this same procession, minus the coffin bearers, was retracing its steps. The faces were clearer now. There was the group from the Lyndendaal offices, and Rosch and Mrs. Lake, and everyone whom they had ever known who was still alive. There was in many of those faces now an odd sort of satisfaction. All those pairs of eyes had witnessed a completion, a thing accomplished, finished, a life lived. There was sorrow there, too. Mrs. Lyndendaal's maid was sobbing openly. And she hadn't had such an easy time of it, Martin knew. Frances had been an exacting mistress, though just.

They went quite quickly down the church steps and into waiting cars. With Martin were Sarah and Emily and Julian and Martha. Martha would have given her place to Fanny, but Julian refused to relinquish his hold on her arm. There was something trance-like about Julian. You couldn't argue with him.

"Sylvia didn't come," said Martin to Sarah.

"No, I thought it best not."

"Fanny's boy came."

"He probably didn't mind so much. Sylvia was very much upset. I tried to say the usual things that one would say to a child, but—"

"They didn't stick," put in Julian unexpectedly. It was his single contribution to the talk.

Martha was grave, but she didn't insult the real mourners by making for herself any pretense of any great depths of sorrow. She had greatly sacrificed her time for Frances during these past weeks, and had done it gladly. The account was closed. Besides, she was occupied with Julian. It wasn't quite decent, the way Julian showed his feelings. He had been thrown by his mother's death into a state for which

there seemed insufficient cause. Julian had known for some time that the rheumatic heart brought on by her disease couldn't last forever, and he had seemed to take that knowledge as they all had. Then, suddenly, he broke. People should hold onto themselves in time of stress, Martin couldn't help thinking. And there was a curious element of fright in Julian's sorrow. And something else—as though he were waiting for some news so important that the mere uncertainty was, in itself, an agony. . . . It was like a man sentenced to be hanged, and having reason to expect a pardon. Well, his mother couldn't come alive again—not for him nor for anyone.

At the house lunch was served. Julian didn't want any. He looked at the dish which was put before him, not recognizing it as food at all. He asked for a drink, gagged at it, but got it down. He had almost ceased to be pitiful. After lunch, he sat without speaking, staring out of the window—or, rather, at one particular spot in the window glass. All talk was subdued, out of deference to the occasion, but there was no reason for not speaking. At two o'clock they were going to the cemetery, all except Hazzard Blue, who was playing a matinee, for which he apologized to Martin.

"Frances would have been the last person," Martin said, "to have you give up your work."

"I knew she would feel that way."

"I'll say she would," said Cousin Henry. Cousin Henry had changed surprisingly little—it was a healthy life he led, on his breeding farm near Meadow Mountain. "Yes, indeed—Frances was a mighty ambitious girl—both for herself and for everyone around. So you go right into that theatre, Mr. Blue, and take your part as neat as you can! And that'll be neat, from what I hear."

"Why, thank you, sir," said Blue. "Some other time, perhaps, when you're in the city on some brighter errand, you'll let me send you seats?"

"It would be a pleasure," said Cousin Henry.

This seemed to Martin a perfectly natural exchange, but Julian winced.

Morris Silvertown had been present at lunch, but he also was returning to work. He and Blue left the house together. As they went out of the room Fanny looked after them and addressed Martin:

"Your two sons-in-law," she said.

"I fancy so—"

"Did Mother know?"

"I don't think so. She probably knows now."

"Oh—do you really believe that?"

"I don't know, Fanny, I don't know—"

Sarah came up, assuming officially those burdens which had devolved upon her unofficially for some time past: "Is there anything you'd like, Father, before we start?"

"Not before we start—"

"Well—after we start, then?"

There was something Martin would like. He hadn't been going to ask for it. And yet, why could he not ask, with Sarah standing before him, so genuinely anxious to carry out any wish he might express?

"Mr. Rosch is going with us," Sarah went on. "He telephoned awhile ago—said you'd understand and wouldn't mind. He asked if any of us would like to drive with him, and suggested that Julian and Martha might—"

"I think it's a very good idea, his taking Julian—"

"Not Martha?"

"That's what I would like—to have Martha go with me."

"Why, of course. There's plenty of room in that big crate of yours for anyone you want."

"Just Martha—"

"You mean, alone?"

"Yes, I want to talk to her. You asked what I would like.

I wouldn't have brought the subject up if you hadn't asked me."

"That's fair enough," said Sarah. "It's nearly two o'clock now. We'd better get our things on."

Martin didn't know what he would have done without Sarah. What would he do when Sarah was married? He'd be all alone. But because he thought so very highly of Morris Silvertown, he would never ask the favor of him, to give up having his own place with his bride. Martin hoped he wasn't selfish in large ways, as he knew he was in small, like not minding that it made a sort of stir, which the family tried to hide, when he stepped into the big car after Martha, and signaled the man to shut the door, and then to drive on. Martha, even, was a little surprised. What did she think—that she was being kidnapped?

"Wasn't the church beautiful?" she asked. "I never saw so many flowers."

Martin answered without turning. "Yes, Frances was very fond of flowers—flowers and jewels. By the way, Tom Fleetwood tells me that she's left you a ring."

"Why, that was very kind of her! I didn't expect anything. She's been very kind to me lately—sending for me, and all. And she kept telling me that she liked me—that I mustn't think, whatever happened, that she didn't. What could happen to make me think that? I suppose, when people are ill, they don't quite know what they're saying. And now a ring. Though it always seems to me a cruel thing that people should benefit by someone's death—even by so little."

"Yes," said Martin, "we're not nearly so civilized as we appear. We die, and the rest of the tribe starts fighting over the odds and ends we call property."

"Do you think I should give the ring up?" Martha asked. "Does Sarah want it—or Fanny—or Aunt Emily?"

"Don't be foolish! It would be too big for any of them. It was too big for her. I'm not speaking of the circlet, but the whole setting. It's a ring I gave her a few years after Julian was born. I picked it up abroad—in Amsterdam, I think. I always urged her to have the rubies reset to please her better, but she never got around to having it done. And now, that won't really be needful. It will suit you very well, as it is. Some day I'll tell you its history—which I suppose is authentic enough. It's in the shape of a fiery cross." Martin changed the subject suddenly: "What's the matter with Julian?" He hadn't gone through the trouble and the talk it would make, having Martha with him, merely to tell her about the jewel Frances had willed to her. The ring was incidental, even though it was said to have belonged to the Emperor Maximilian, who was weak—unlike Martha—and, unlike Martha, had little life of his own, but permitted himself to be used to pull other people's chestnuts out of the fire.

"Well, of course, Julian and his mother were very close," said Martha, "but I didn't realize he felt about her as he evidently must have felt."

"He didn't."

"Then his grief is all the more unexplained."

"If it is grief," said Martin.

"What do you mean? What else could it be?"

What Martin meant was why he was here with Martha, alone. But it was hard to say to her. He must say it:

"I mean, people are so foolish, thinking they can cover what they do. It's so easy to find out what anyone does, if it's worth the bother. Julian's been seeing this woman, this Zari Hanajos, for a long time now. For him, she has left her Russian. There was some fuss about the income with which I was supplying them—she didn't get her share of it, so I'm given to understand. But she got some. Now she gets nothing—except from Julian. And it doesn't strike me that

what Julian can manage in that way would be quite enough. It doesn't strike me she's a woman to do things for nothing."

Martin had spoken without looking at Martha. Now that he had stopped speaking, he turned. It was stupid of him to have thought she wouldn't take it as she was taking it, or that it would break her fortitude.

"Perhaps she did it for love," Martha said at last. And then, after further pause—"What you've told me explains a good deal. But as you knew about it, you should have told me before."

"I didn't want to worry you—I thought it might pass."

"And then Julian would come back to me, as good as new?"

"Yes," said Martin, "as good as new."

"I've been wondering about how Julian's been spending his money—he's been so broke lately—going without a lot of little things he usually has—but of course, if he's had her to look after, that explains it. And the old man's trunk—do you remember my telling you how he spoke of it? I suppose she wanted him to steal again. That was why he talked of leaving the business—so he wouldn't be tempted. There would be all kinds of ways in which he could take money from the business, and it wouldn't be found out for some weeks, perhaps. He could ask some of his customers to make out checks direct to him, and then not turn them in—he could draw money for various fictitious expenditures. Of course . . ." Martha repeated the phrase, and was lost in a concentration of thinking.

Martin had been going to tell her about the chance of Julian's defalcations, but in a way he was glad he didn't have to. There was something else.

"I don't suppose you know," he said, "that Julian's mother possessed, in her own name, a quite considerable sum of money."

Martha looked up quickly. "And she's left it to Julian?"

"That's what I'm not sure of. Tom Fleetwood knows—he drew the will—but he won't say. He's perfectly within his rights, not to say. But it might be that that's what Julian's in such a stew about—under the circumstances."

"I see—under the circumstances. Then it wasn't what Mrs. Lyndendaal told him?"

"What she told him?"

"The day she died—the day you and Morris Silverton went and found him—and he went in to see her. Because, if it had been what she told him, he wouldn't be so worried. He'd know—definitely—one way or the other."

"Yes," said Martin, "I suppose he'd know. What do you think he'll do, if he's been left a fortune?"

Martha spoke, as if to herself. "If Zari wants him—as she would, if he has money—"

"You mean, you'll let her have him—without a struggle?"

"Isn't it a little late for struggle?" Martha asked.

"You would know more about that than I would."

"We'll all know about a lot of things when we hear the will. I'm told Mr. Fleetwood's going to read it to us at your house to-morrow morning."

Martin's tone matched hers. They might have been discussing the bleak December landscape, or the weather, turned wintry overnight, or any unrelated and at the same time casual matter. "It's rather an old-fashioned custom," he commented, "the heirs being gathered together to hear their fates. But it's what she wanted done. Ten o'clock—don't forget. Ten o'clock to-morrow."

"I'm not very likely to forget, am I?"

It seemed to Martin, in the hours which followed, that no one forgot anything. All that ceremony! Why couldn't people go to their graves simply? They called it respect for the dead. It was really display for the living. There was a barbaric element to the thing which was not the kind of barbarism Martin understood. He would miss his wife. Was

this a way of telling people so? And would he have to tell them with a very special emphasis because he had not been an entirely devoted mate? Realization of this fact made her death harder to bear, not easier. In truth, his grief was honest enough—quite as honest as the silver handles on the casket and the marble he would order for the monument.

It could be said that he had—apart from the lavishness of grandeur—an odd way of showing his sorrow, this request of his that he should drive with Martha alone. It shouldn't be making any difference to him now, whom he drove with. His own daughters ought to be his prescribed comforters on such an occasion. But any criticism was less important than that Martha should be told of what had happened, and warned of what might. Martin must give her this knowledge, as you would give a person a cloak against the wind, or a weapon against an intruder. Neither cloak nor weapon might be enough. It might be too late, as she had said—too late for struggle. But the next morning, seeing Martha, so dignified and handsome in her smart black clothes, Martin had the satisfaction of knowing that he had at least muffled for her the detonation of anything which might take place.

In this very room, it was, that they all sat. Martin could, in his thinking, move the furniture about, add a few chairs, and place everyone. The room seemed still to echo with Fleetwood's dry voice, which had cut the silence like the metallic scraping of thousands of insects' wings. It was a sound with no tone, no musical range whatever, and yet it was perfectly audible, even to those listeners who had chosen seats farthest removed from that great desk there, over which the lawyer had appeared to hover. Despite the solemnity of the occasion, Martin couldn't help knowing that his brother-in-law was having an extremely good time. He was occupied as he liked to be occupied, in telling others what they didn't know, but wished most eagerly to hear.

And he didn't hurry about it, either. He prolonged the expectancy of his audience. Once, at a critical point, he deliberately stopped and wiped his eyeglasses on the piece of silk he always kept in his upper left-hand pocket for such purpose.

"I, Frances Calverton Lyndendaal, wife of Martin Lyndendaal, of the City, County and State of New York, do hereby make, publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking any and all former wills at any time made by me.

"FIRST: I give and bequeath to my said husband, Martin Lyndendaal, the Raphael Madonna which hangs in my bedroom, and any other one picture or article of furniture as he shall select."

"I think I should explain," said Fleetwood, "that Mrs. Lyndendaal refers specifically to pieces with which her husband has presented her from time to time, and given documentary evidence to that effect."

He went on:

"SECOND: I give and bequeath to Martha Christiansen Lyndendaal, wife of my son, Julian Lyndendaal, my diamond and ruby ring, which is now set in the shape of a cross, and at one time formed part of the crown jewels of the Emperor Maximilian."

The rest, "residue and remainder" of Frances's jewels, ornaments, clothing, personal effects, household furniture, and so forth and so forth, were left, in great detail, to Emily, Sarah and Fanny. The list of them read like a catalogue. The sable coat went to Sarah, the chinchilla wrap to Fanny.

"SIXTH: All the rest of my property and estate, of every kind and description, and wherever the same may be situated, I give and bequeath to my executors, hereinafter named, to have and to hold the same, IN TRUST, nevertheless, for the following uses and purposes, to wit:"

It was here that Fleetwood wiped his glasses. "I think I

should say," he remarked, "that shortly before her death, Mrs. Lyndendaal gave very generously to certain charities, and made a number of settlements on several of her employees. But I must not interrupt myself."

Everyone was most anxious that he should not interrupt himself.

"'1: To set aside out of said residuary estate a sufficient amount in cash or securities as properly invested will yield a net annual income of five thousand dollars, and to apply such net income to the use of my daughter, Sarah Lyndendaal Mattiabelli, during the term of her natural life. Upon her death the principal of said trust shall be divided among her issue, if any, per stirpes; if none, among the issue of my daughter, Frances Lyndendaal Blue.

"'2: To invest and reinvest the remainder of my said residuary estate, to collect the income, issues and profits, and, after deducting the necessary expenses of administration, to apply the net income to the use of my son, Julian Lyndendaal, during the term of his natural life. Upon his death, my said trustees shall pay and transfer the principal of said trust to such persons and in such proportions as my said son shall by last will and testament appoint. And, in the case of the failure of my said son to exercise such power of appointment the principal of said trust shall be divided among his issue in equal shares, if any; if none, to such persons as would inherit my estate in case I then died intestate.' "

Julian had been sitting with hand and chin resting on the crook of his cane, and staring at a swirling branch in the design of the carpet at his feet. At mention of his name he transferred his fixed gaze to the face of the lawyer. He took his news full on. Everyone was looking at him, and looking at Martha. Martha preserved her composure. Julian didn't. His fixed stare relaxed. He flushed, until he seemed as suffused as from a fever. His shoulders came straight. He

gave the effect of stretching, though he did not really do so.

Under cover of Fleetwood's further exposition—a series of detailed directions to the executors, and powers granted them—a whisper started. It went all around that circle of people, like a shadow passing from one to the other, and then shadows merging:

"How much does that leave for Julian?"

"I don't know—"

"Frances never discussed financial matters—"

"It wasn't in good taste—"

"You must know about it, Emily—"

"You forget—a lawyer's lips are sealed, even to his wife—"

"It's like a doctor—"

Martin heard it all. His ears were keen. Martha heard it, too, but nothing could intrude upon that beautiful composure. Julian was seated on the other side of Martha.

"It will seem funny, having money of my own—" This was Julian's contribution to the whispering.

Several of those here present knew that Julian did not regard as his own the money he made in the cake business. In reply to him, Martha smiled, the way you might smile at the vagary of a child.

Fleetwood's voice drowned out the whispering:

"'LASTLY: I hereby nominate, constitute and appoint my brother-in-law, THOMAS FLEETWOOD, and the AMERICAN TITLE AND TRUST COMPANY OF NEW YORK to be the executors of, and the trustees under, this my last Will and Testament, and I direct that neither of them be required to furnish any bond or other undertaking for the faithful performance of their duties as such.

"'IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 14th day of November, Nineteen hundred and twenty-four.

"'Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said testatrix as and for her last Will and Testament—'"

"Oh, God!" said Julian, and rose.

They all saw him get up, and saw him go out of the room. Martha made as if to follow him, but Martin signaled her to remain. Tom Fleetwood laid the document upon the desk there. In the moment of silence which followed its reading, he took off his glasses and placed them carefully in their protecting container.

"You can fight it if you like," he addressed Martin. "After all, your wife's fortune was at least founded on property you transferred to her at various junctures, in order to secure her future. I drew the will as she directed. I had no choice, being her attorney, and, in my opinion, in spite of her fatal illness—you can see by the date this will was executed less than three weeks ago—her mind was entirely sound. But I don't say that you wouldn't have a case."

It was Martha who answered him: "Why should he fight it? I'm sure that it's entirely suitable that the bulk of the money goes to Sarah. She is, after all, a single woman. What little may be over for my husband can hardly be worth suing for."

"What do you mean, the bulk of the money?" This from Gordon.

Why Gordon was present wasn't clear. He was not one of his sister's heirs. Possibly the invitations had been general, to the whole family, and not announced by Tom Fleetwood, who had sole knowledge of who was directly concerned.

"Didn't you know, Martha?" Emily spoke.

Emily was an heir. She was left clothing and jewels and a few other trifling articles.

"All those long talks you had with her, towards the end—" Gordon's wife put that in. Martin had never liked her.

It was Martin's turn: "No, I shan't fight it. It was her money, to do with as she pleased. If she invested it well, that was her good judgment. She always paid her personal expenses—clothes, doctors, travel and such. That is, unless you

want me to fight it, Martha. I should prefer to let it stand." He felt within himself a curious loyalty to the dead woman, even though she had played this trick upon them all. He turned again to Fleetwood: "By the way, Tom, at just about how much would you estimate this fortune? I've been busy lately, and I haven't bothered to make any inquiries."

"Let me see," said the lawyer, "let me see—" He started riffling through some papers on the desk.

Sarah came over to Martha and put her hand on hers. "I'm really very glad for you. I'm quite satisfied as things are. Morris is all against taking anything from Father, but I'm sure he won't mind my having my own little nest egg, and it's quite enough."

"Well, at least," said Fanny, "you have something!"

"What about the chinchilla fur?" Sarah answered quickly. "Won't that look marvelous at First Nights? When you've gone on that diet you're always talking about, you won't even have to have it made over to fit you."

"I suppose you'll give up your bakery now," Mrs. Gordon addressed Martha, "and live like a civilized human being."

Emily spoke, not to Martha, but to the room: "Tom has such a high regard for the ethics of his profession—I sometimes wish he didn't."

Martin knew that no one here—with the possible exception of Tom Fleetwood—cared more for money than Martha did, or had worked harder to attain it. But because her concern was unsuppressed, a circumstance which pointed up such concern, and brought it out of hiding, didn't affect her as a cat might be affected by an overdose of catnip. At this moment, the room reminded Martin of the henyard on the old farm when, as a boy, he had finished scattering the contents of a pan of grain. Martha sat calm, in the center of an envy which would have engulfed her if it hadn't puzzled her. It must have puzzled her greatly, not knowing the truth. Martin had done his poor best to prepare her. Never having seen his

wife's will, he had had no means of knowing that the truth would be withheld so long. He had thought she would know by now, one way or the other. Let the truth come from Fleetwood, not himself. Besides, he had had no idea that Martha was unaware of the approximate size of the estate. Julian had known, obviously, and never told her.

"Well, Tom?" Martin prodded. "How much? How much is Julian in for?"

The question enforced a general silence. Though it wasn't a very important question to most of the others, and Julian had gone.

Tom Fleetwood hesitated. "It's difficult to estimate, exactly. I should hardly care to commit myself to any hard and fast sum. There are taxes, of course, and administrative expenses. But I should say, roughly, after these are met, and the trust to Sarah, that your son Julian will have an annual income of approximately thirty thousand dollars."

That surprised even Martin himself, who hadn't bothered to inquire. Julian was free now. His mother, with one magnificent gesture of her small white hand, had opened the door for him. Oh, yes, they had all seen him go out of it. But most of them hadn't known where he was going. In fact, come to think of it, none of them had known that, except Martin. Even Martha hadn't known, until this moment.

She sat very still. Martin was glad she was sitting, and not standing. Her composure strengthened until it was a complete shield, and then she spoke:

"I think, in justice to myself, I should say that whatever money Julian has inherited, it in no way benefits me."

"What do you mean?" The question came in a babble of voices.

"You'll know, all in good time. You'll know—" She rose very deliberately and walked out of the room. Her second promise of knowledge was given at the instant of her exit.

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Martha might have said, Martin thought, that his inheritance in no way benefited Julian. But Frances had thought it would. She had had one aim in life, she once told Martin, to make Julian happy. And he had not been happy in the cake business. He had not been entirely happy with Martha. Something had been wrong with Julian's happiness, all down the line, and his mother knew it and wished to right that wrong. He needed money of his own—that, she had known, for didn't he come to her for it?—and now he would have it, forever. Money meaning to Martin as little as it did, he bore Frances no resentment for the way she had arranged her affairs. If she had divided her property between her own nearest kin, still leaving him out, he would have been delighted. There would have been something for Julian, but would it have been enough?

The estate wasn't settled for some six months or more. On the expectation of what was coming to him, Julian borrowed. He needed money now more than ever, because he lost his job. Martha told Martin that a man with a private income of thirty thousand a year could hardly take sufficient interest in work bringing in a mere fraction of this sum to make it fair, either to him or to the firm. It was all she told him. He learned quite by chance—not even from Anna—that she and Julian weren't living together. And then Martha brought suit for divorce. It was all very quietly arranged. The suit was uncontested. Zari Hanajos was named as co-respondent. Who was Zari Hanajos? A foreign vaudeville singer. Julian had met her first at some entertainment given by the Blues, who felt themselves much to blame. No one, who might have done so, saw fit to disillusion them. Morris Silverton became Vice-President of the CRUMPLE CAKE CORPORATION. He also managed the duties of General Sales Manager, and

did not relinquish his position as Treasurer. He married the Countess Mattiabelli.

The happy couple spent a brief honeymoon in Bermuda, returning to the residence of the Countess's father, while their new apartment on Park Avenue was being prepared for their occupancy. They lived in Julian's old quarters, Sarah's own suite undergoing a dismantling process for the benefit of the new place. Martin was very generous with Sarah in the matter of her taking from the house anything she could use. He asked just one thing of her—that after she was reasonably settled herself, she should see to its closing. Sarah would be glad to do that. Of course—anything—she expressed herself as a trifle conscience-stricken about her father. But he was all right. He was going abroad, combining business with a long-deferred vacation. He was going abroad in the *Dannebrog* with his children.

Were not Sylvia and Matthew his? He asked one more favor of Sarah—that Sylvia be lent him for that summer, which was the season a year and a half from the November when Frances had died. He had made a mistake with his other children. He had not shown them from whence they came. They had known nothing of farms and small countries and the open sea. They took much for granted that should not be taken so. They had found everything except themselves. Fanny had done pretty well for herself. Sarah was a woman whom a man could not question—even if he were her father. Julian had borne the brunt of the injury. It wasn't only Frances who had been to blame—it was Martin, too.

But Martin was less occupied now than he had been then—less occupied, not only with the press of his affairs but with his own life. And not being absorbed by it, he knew more about it. So he would take these two unfathered children who had been so miraculously accorded him—for you couldn't call Mattiabelli a father, despite the fact that his status was

recognized by law—and see what he could do. The project had one feature of which he hadn't thought. It brought Matthew out into the open. The general public hadn't been aware before that Martin Lyndendaal had an adopted son.

Fanny and Emily and Sarah's friends thought Sarah was crazy, allowing her eight-year-old child to embark on this voyage of discovery. Martin was amused to see that the comment served to strengthen, rather than weaken, Sarah's consent. His eldest daughter was no fool, and she had landed—against all likelihood—fairly well on her feet at last.

It was a strange departure, not only for the little Sylvia, but for everyone. There was Martin and his granddaughter and his adopted son, and Anna Christiansen and a governess and Eric, and the captain and the crew. The ship sailed from a pier in Brooklyn. Everyone who had the slightest excuse to do so came down to see them off. The day was a warm June day, but Anna—in honor of such a journey—wore a good warm coat and a knitted muffler and her black Sunday hat. Anna had been inveigled into going by her unwillingness to trust Matthew without her, and the opportunity afforded to visit her people and perhaps strut before them a little. She had, after all, come to America and made a fortune. She insisted on paying Martin a sum equivalent to a second cabin round trip fare. He accepted the money solemnly. The cashmere shawl he later bought her in London was of a quality rarely to be obtained.

The newspaper photographs showed up very plainly the resemblance between Martin and Matthew. Nothing was said about it—not in print. There was so much else to say, in print and out of it, and so much else to think about. However, on the day they sailed, with the little knot of people standing on the dock waving, Martin could seem to think only about Martha. Why couldn't Martha be with them? She had her business. She had to see to it, and see—she half laughingly admitted—that the control of it remained in her

hands, now that she'd acquired such an able assistant. Martin felt that Martha had let Julian go a little too easily. It was as if she had wanted him to go—been relieved instead of devastated. But there was nothing Martin could do—nothing further. Which was one of the reasons he was where he was, at the ship's rail, waving back.

If Martha had talked to him, he could have advised her. But she hadn't. That was the way women were in these days of their emancipation. There was no forgiveness in them—not for male transgression. They had such a good opinion of themselves, women like Martha. They thought they could give a man everything there was to give, and brooked no rival. In the days of unenlightenment matters were differently arranged. But now, women were looking into all the corners for themselves. Sarah would undoubtedly be extremely particular about the conduct of her Morris. But Sarah would have no cause for alarm—or at least less than almost any woman. Martha wasn't like Sarah. She took men in a manner more casually, and in a manner less so. Sarah had been pretty well schooled in the ways of men. There had been that first marriage of hers, and then that hiatus of single blessedness. Martha, prior to Julian, had had no such advantages.

A hiatus of single blessedness. For Martha, that same hiatus—and after a young and unfortunate marriage, too—now yawned. How would she fill it? She ought not to be left alone. What would she do, beyond working like the very devil? She would do as she pleased, Martin felt sure. One thing he doubted if she'd ever do was to live, permanently, with Anna and Matthew. For the moment, this question would not arise. Time enough to settle it when Matthew and Anna returned. For the boy, there were other alternatives. Perhaps he could be sent away to school. How would it be for Matthew to live with him, going to a good day school in New York—out of the house, every morning,

swinging his books . . . He could bring his dog there—Adolphus Rex was now being boarded in the country—and Eric could have an eye to them both. Would it be the best thing for Matthew to live in such a fine house? Would he get the idea which he already had a little, that the world belonged to him exclusively? At least Matthew had never for a moment been dubious—or pretended to be dubious—about this voyage. It had struck him from the first as an idea unparalleled in its perfection.

Anna had been distinctly dubious, and Sarah, and even the little Sylvia. As for the governess, Miss Thompson, she would never have come, so she said, had it not been for her loyalty to the Countess, now Mrs. Silverton. She had been in Mrs. Silverton's employ for so long—yes, long enough to have had many short trips on Martin's yacht, and seen enough of the captain, who was a widower, to wish to better the acquaintance. Eric tipped Martin off to that one.

"You watch, sir," he told Martin. "I understand a sea voyage is extremely favorable for that sort of thing."

Martin doubted it, in Thompson's case, and said so.

"I admit, sir, she's not very prepossessing." Eric knew Miss Thompson well in the Lyndendaal household, and never had liked her. She was above him in the scale, and yet not sufficiently so. He regarded her as an upper servant, and himself as an upper servant. She doubtless regarded him as a servant, and herself as something quite other. Eric never knew that once upon a time Mrs. Martin Lyndendaal had been a governess.

"It's a pity," said Martin, "that she isn't younger. She might cop off one of the mates, and they're better looking than Captain Graff. He always reminds me of a fried apple."

"Fried, sir?"

"Yes, fried—and curling up at the edges."

They both must have underestimated the people of whom they talked, who were married in London. Martin gave

them a wedding breakfast at the Savoy. But this was still in the future on the trip over. Martin couldn't worry about that too much, just sitting on the sunny deck and resting and playing with the children and listening to their talk. One morning he was sitting where the windows of the dining saloon were open behind him, and Anna was doing most of the talking. She was seeing to the children's breakfast. Martin had had his. He was so accustomed to getting up early that he never could sleep after seven—even seven was a concession to leisure.

"You're a bad boy," Anna was saying, "to waste your good oatmeal all over your napkin!"

"Oh, there's a lot of oatmeal in the kitchen—I mean, the galley. There's a lot of everything here. They're not stingy the way you are."

"I am not stingy—only saving—waste not, want not."

"I wouldn't like it, not to want—I want a lot of things, and I'll have them, too!"

"I did not mean it, so," said Anna.

"Uncle Martin told me—"

Martin was eavesdropping—an occupation highly reprehensible—but Anna played into his hands:

"And what did Uncle Martin tell you?" From her tone, you felt, she didn't yet wholly trust what Martin might say.

"He told me I could have anything I wanted—anything—if I worked hard enough to get it."

"And didn't want too many things, Matthew—"

Sylvia chimed in—"You want such silly things, Matthew, like the engines in the cellar—"

"A ship doesn't have a cellar."

"Any place that you go downstairs far enough to get to, is a cellar—"

"It is not—"

"It is—"

"Children—I cannot have this quarrel—"

"You're not having it, Mother Anna—we are!"

The talk, Martin could see, was getting well ahead of Anna, but he didn't mind. It suited his mood, the whole thing. He felt a kind of spiritual well-being, a re-establishment of forces within himself, which had become atrophied through disuse. Children—his children—they had skipped a generation, somehow.

"Did it ever occur to you, Mother Anna, that some day I shall have a ship as big as this one—bigger, maybe—and a great deal of money?"

"No, it never did. People are not happy because they have a big ship and money."

"I'll take a chance," said Matthew. "And then, Sylvia, I will buy you a very pretty dress—prettier than any dress you now have—even if you do say it's a cellar—"

"It is! Mother would not let me take such a dress from you, Matthew, though I thank you very much."

"Sylvia is right, Matthew. Nice little girls do not accept such presents."

"They would from me. Everyone accepts presents from Uncle Martin. Did you know, Cousin Anna, that a boy at school told me that Uncle Martin was really my father—"

"Hush, Matthew—he was a very wicked boy to tell you such a thing! Uncle Martin got you from a very poor family who could not take of you the proper care. But you do not remember."

"I remember something. There was a woman—she was not good to me. It was safer to keep away from her as much as possible. I remember going in a big car, like a room, and it was dark outside, and then everything was different from that time on. I lived for a while in a place called a hotel, and then I came to live with you."

"I have never lived anywhere but at home," Sylvia said. This statement was doubtless accompanied by a look of admiration in those big dark eyes of hers.

"That must be stupid for you—"

"Oh, not so very. All my homes are very nice. And in the summer the ocean comes right up almost to the edge of the garden. In my new home, I have all my own things, so it isn't really new. And Papa Morris is very nice to me, though he is not as noisy about it as Grandpapa. I think he likes Mother a little better than he likes me."

"I hope so," said Anna. "After all, he married her! He would hardly have married her if he hadn't liked her more than he could ever like anyone."

"Your mother is very pretty"—this from Matthew—"and she smells so nice."

"She does smell nice, but she says she is not really pretty—it is only that she has pretty clothes. They hang in her closets, all done up in paper that you can see through. She says she will not have as many pretty clothes now, but she doesn't mind."

"The Countess is a very grand lady, and will always have pretty clothes," said Anna.

"She is not a countess any more—she gave up being one when she married Papa Morris. But she does not mind that, either. She does not mind anything—not even mind sleeping in the same bed with him. She says she does that because they are married—"

"That is her business, Sylvia—you should not talk about—"

Sylvia went straight on—"It doesn't seem a reason to me. Grandmama was married to Grandpapa, and they never slept in the same bed."

"Sylvia—little girls do not talk about—"

"I've never known any married people," said Matthew. "Not people who were married to each other. I mean, I haven't known them well."

"Don't you know Uncle Julian and Aunt Martha?" Sylvia asked.

"Not well. Aunt Martha comes to see us, but I'm usually in

bed when she comes. Uncle Julian came to see us once. I liked him. He talked to me for a long time."

"Yes," said Anna, "I remember."

This was more than Martin did. He'd never heard about it before.

"He seemed very pleased that I lived in such a nice place."

"I don't see why he should care where you lived," said Sylvia.

"I thought it was funny, myself. I guess he was just being kind."

This was rather a new view of Julian, but not impossible.

Sylvia said that she hadn't seen her uncle lately. "And he didn't come to Mother's wedding. You didn't come either."

"I wasn't invited," said Matthew. "Mother Anna received a beautiful letter about it—not in writing—and yet it was in writing, but not written with a pen or a pencil—"

"What did the letter say?"

"Let me see now—there were two envelopes, one inside the other, like one of these puzzle boxes. It said—'Mr. Martin Lyndendaal has the honor to announce the marriage of his daughter—' And then it went on with names and so on—it was on very heavy paper, almost like cardboard, and yet it wasn't cardboard."

"Oh," said Sylvia, "those were the announcements. It was mostly announcements. It was a very small wedding." As she said that last, Martin could have thought it Sarah speaking.

"I think now I shall probably be invited—"

"Where?" asked Sylvia.

"I don't know where, exactly—just places that are interesting to go."

"Your school is interesting enough for you," Anna put in. "You'll have plenty of time to think about going to other places when you are older."

When he was older . . . Yes, the future of Matthew would not be so simple. Perhaps Martin had not sufficiently considered it. He had rescued the boy, played God, taken on

his shoulders a responsibility which he would have to meet completely. The responsibility would grow—not lessen—with the years—and, as the boy was a fine boy, it was very great. Anna had her limitations, though she did her best. Children mustn't talk of this and they mustn't talk of that. They must be thrifty and mannerly and content with their lot—eat what was put before them, and not ask too many questions. The Lyndendaal grandson would outgrow Anna's limitations, just as Martha had.

But upon what days had Martin fallen? Was he an old man sitting by the fireside, with nothing to do but rock the cradle? No, he had but just turned sixty, which was the prime of life—his own life, not his grandchildren's. It seemed that he had been thinking of nothing but his age, excusing himself on that score. His work had gone dry and routine. He no longer gave it his best thought. Here he was, on his way to Europe—it was, in part at least, a business trip—and he hadn't even brought a secretary. He hadn't brought one because he hadn't wanted one—no one but Miss Bellows, certainly, and Miss Bellows could ill be spared from the New York office. The *Dannebrog* was equipped with radio. He sent a radiogram to Miss Bellows to take the next boat and meet them in London. She would get there almost as soon as they would. A radiogram came back—"I suppose you know what you're doing—sailing to-night."

In London there were men to see and projects to discuss. And then a tour—a sort of grand tour—of Northern Europe. All the iron works, and the metal works, and the mills in Northern Sweden, and the Lappland mines of the Grangesberg Company, down through Stockholm, across to Germany and Essen and the Thyssen mills. Old August Thyssen had died. But the business he founded was bigger than he was. It included everything, from iron fields to electrical power. Martin would stop at Luxemburg and, through France, back into England and north again to Glasgow.

He would take the boy with him. Matthew could have his

fill of engines then. He would leave the girl with Anna at one of the farms—possibly at the farm he had given his brother Peter, which was a very fine farm indeed. Both the children would see, in such a way, the dynasty to which they belonged. And as for Martin himself, he would get a fresh view of this steel of his, which had gone a little stale to him. There would be new things to watch, new people, the glow in the skies would be a new glow, and in his mind he would be starting over from a new beginning.

A man never stayed still. He went backward or forward. And for himself he had been going back. He had been depending too much on the easy progress through his mills of those beams and girders which, figuratively if not quite literally, went in at one end of his works as though poured from a funnel, and came out the other end ready to be hoisted ten, twenty, forty, sixty stories into the air. And then the money for them, invested and reinvested, speculated with—or gambled with if you preferred the term—always at a profit. The making of money had been too easy. This ease had seeped into the steel itself. Martin didn't want ease—not that he'd ever had it. This particular journey—this sight-seeing tour with trimmings—was about as near to ease as he had ever come. This was ease with something added. With youth added, questioning and troublesome and unspoiled. He was very close to Sylvia and to Matthew. He had never felt quite the same closeness with the generation in between.

He was Uncle Martin, he was Grandpapa, he was the giver of all good and a superior being. His name was the Open Sesame for wonders to behold. And he could behold the wonders, too, and have a greater sight for them with greater knowledge. He missed Martha and wished she could be with him, and yet was sometimes glad that she was not. Her presence might have introduced an element of discontent—not her discontent, but his own.

It was an odd pilgrimage. Martin was not surprised that

it was so considered. A very odd pilgrimage—junketing about to the farms of Denmark and the industrial centers of Europe, sometimes by car, sometimes by rail, sometimes—when the map warranted—by a large unwieldy yacht. Martin's companions were two children, a middle-aged bride and groom, an elderly widow, a somewhat less elderly secretary and Eric. You couldn't simply say that Eric was Martin's valet and let the definition go at that. You couldn't define any of these people in terms of their employment or their relationship. Age, class, individual preferences, were blended in a sense impossible in their native habitats. This was as true of the children as of their elders. Sylvia Mattiabelli and Matthew Lyndendaal were human beings first, and children only incidentally. Any unusual qualities which they natively possessed became, as the summer continued, more apparent. Many of the limitations, which most children owned to, were those imposed upon them from without. The limitations of this favored pair were the unavoidable lacks inherent in the incompleteness of their mental and physical development—nothing further.

A whole volume could have been filled with the incidents of that one summer. They called upon kings and tinkers. They visited shrines, and saw vast graveyards pitted with thousands of crosses. The dainty Sylvia had an adventure in a pigsty, so Martin was told—that was when he was off with Matthew through the belching centers of metal—she fell into it headfirst and was squealed at by a dozen occupants. Matthew got lost in a mine shaft for several hours. Some of the summer's adventures were less harrowing, like the evening they passed—the children safely tucked in bed—in a beer hall of obviously low character. The dignified Eric drank a little too much beer and insisted upon teaching the bride—formerly Miss Thompson—a rather strenuous folk dance. She was good at it, too. The summer was near to perfect, and always remained so in Martin's memory. From a purely

selfish angle, and from the benefits accruing to Martin's own party, it was wholly perfect.

The children were none the worse, certainly. It was an experience which etched a value deep into their beings. They were returned to their more ordered and conventional environment as good as new in all essentials, and rather better than new in many ways not usual or essential to the young. For Martin himself, the summer's accomplishment was more in the realm of salvage. He seemed miraculously to have regained the spirit which had once carried him so far. He was again the old Martin, not merely a figure going through the motions of Martin. No problem could be too great for him to tackle—not even the reconstruction of his plants, and the fulfilling of contracts which would keep him active for years to come.

As a matter of fact, he was extremely glad to be back—this in the face of the wonders he had beheld, the wonders he had freely admitted, without any denials bred of any narrow patriotism. During the war, many plants in Europe had been destroyed, completely or partially, and had therefore been reconstructed according to the most modern requirements. And, with certain shifting boundaries, works altogether new had been built, very fine and up-to-date, especially in Germany. It might have been thought ominous, Martin's interest in the German works, and another proof of the charge of the world-brotherhood of munition makers. But Martin was no longer a munition maker. Neither were many of these men, whose guest he was. Everywhere the sword was beaten to a ploughshare, and all was peace. Those were the brief days of the German Republic. And Martin, as a guest, saw the Republic yet more briefly.

Ebert, the president, was a good man. He was wise and competent. But he was not a strong man, in the accepted Germanic sense, and he was somewhat tarred with the brush of enlightened socialism which a majority of the German

people so mistrusted. These people were bred to a heavy rein, to being told when and where to blow their collective—almost their individual—noses. Call it a sense of order, gone wrong. Any appearance of freedom frightened them, and made of them children lost in a forest. They would welcome a rescuer from this dread state—any rescuer. Of course that summer, they had not found one. Hindenburg came later. He had once been a strong man, but Hindenburg had been born at least twenty years too soon, and had had four grueling years of war into the bargain.

Yes, there were things wrong with Germany—decidedly wrong. Martin had never noticed it so much before. He knew Germans all over the world, and many of his friends were of German blood. Perhaps that was it. The best of the race, those with a leaven of independence in their souls, had left their native land for greener fields. This migration had been going on all through the previous century. The same could be said of other European countries, but not in quite the same way. It would be, in other countries, either the lowest, or a mere cross-section of the population who had gone away. It was chance that had speeded his own departure, not any dissatisfaction with the existing order. And as for Axel—well, Axel had had big ideas. The bigness of the new country had appealed to his imagination. So many things did. And then Axel—at long distance—had become involved with that political section which was responsible for the things about Denmark which were wrong.

That was what Martin minded—what he saw in Denmark. He didn't really care what happened to Germany, in itself. He had had no means of knowing then the things he knew at the present time, thirteen years later. But if the German people had been just a little different from the way they were, their Republic might have remained with them, and developed finally into a reasonable government—not a menace to the world at large, nor to Denmark, whose extreme

socialists had played right into the hands of the menace, right from the start.

Martin could be excused, and he excused himself, for believing that his own race, and even his cousin Scandinavians, were better than the Germans, possessing all their good qualities and none of their bad. They were not so timorous, or so brutal. They stood on their own feet. They would never be easily a prey to the unscrupulous. Perhaps they were a little smug about themselves—a little limited, in outlook as well as in land. Perhaps they were too racially compact, and believed that because of this you could work things in Denmark that you couldn't work anywhere else in the world. Raise hogs—raise dairy cattle—make butter—make cheese. Why, there were nearly as many pigs in Denmark as there were people—and that wasn't meant as the obvious insult it could be turned to! Yes, the summer had been perfect, except for Denmark. And Denmark had been not quite perfect. But why should Martin worry about Denmark? He had a new country, to which he had come back. And was his new country perfect? By no means. But it was so big. It appealed to his imagination, just as it had appealed to Axel's. But with Axel, his imagination had always outdistanced his accomplishment. Axel's real accomplishment was Martha. And Martha was Anna's child, too.

And there she was, standing on the dock to greet him. Time had stopped, and now it had begun again. Things happened. Things had happened. Some of them he had forgotten. He had no idea that Martha's and Julian's divorce had become final. The news, given casually by Sarah as if it were no news—that Julian had married Zari Hanajos—had on him the soft impact of a bullet which had traveled too great a distance to be lethal. He might have answered Sarah, though he didn't: "Zari Hanajos? Julian? Who are they? Oh, yes, my son . . ."

What he did say was in reply to a question put by a gentle-

man of the press: "What do you think of your son's marriage, Mr. Lyndendaal?"

"I haven't given it any thought."

"If you had been here, would you have tried to stop it?"

"No."

"Let me put that differently. Would you have advised your son against it?"

"No."

"Do you consider it a desirable marriage?"

"It has its features," said Martin.

"Do you care to elucidate that comment?"

"No."

"Wasn't your son married before?"

"Yes, to this lady," Martin said. Martha was standing near.

"Oh—I'm sorry—"

"That's quite all right," said Martha. There was an impenetrable calm about Martha, but she still liked to know things. Afterwards, she asked Martin what he had meant by saying, "It has its features."

"Well, hasn't it?" Martin answered her. "He wasn't satisfied with one way of life. Now he'll get another."

"I understand that his wife's obtained a vaudeville engagement. She's taken up her career again in a big way. I think that's rather to her credit."

"Oh, so do I—so do I—"

In fact, everyone was acting in a highly creditable manner.

The period which Martin had just spanned and completed, reaching about it no very enlightening conclusions, but at least getting it reasonably straight in his own thinking, was a period concerned primarily with people. The one upon

which he entered, after his return from abroad—and which he must therefore now consider—was a period of things. Or perhaps things took on the functions and aspects of people, like trees in a fairy story. It was as if, through them, and only so, could human progress be discerned.

There was the Baker Building—one of the finest office buildings in Brooklyn. It was an open secret that this was Martin's private venture. Otherwise, real estate experts might have wondered a little why that particular site had been chosen. But you didn't wonder too much about what Martin Lyndendaal might do, and you didn't worry unduly, as real estate values in the neighborhood had been helped, not hindered, by the project. Sentimentally enough, the old house which harbored the original CRUMPLE CAKE establishment, was one of the somewhat shabby structures which had been torn down to make way for the white stone façade of the new edifice, and its marble foyer and the steel and masonry which held firm its lower reaches. As it rose to the sky sea birds had flown off. It was as if the very clouds themselves had been disturbed that its final inset tower might blazon forth the great sign which could be seen from bridges and tugs and elevated stations, and any point of vantage within miles. The sign read: CRUMPLE CAKES, INCORPORATED. WHENEVER THE HOUR OF HUNGER STRIKES. A huge clock, in the very peak of the tower, pointed the moral.

One sign? It was really two—one for day, silvered to catch the sun, and one for night, thousands of lights which appeared to revolve around the tower. This tower, except for the space where the works of the clock were housed, was occupied by the offices of CRUMPLE CAKES. The sign in its orbit cast curious shadows in through the office windows and—especially in summer when the windows were open—the click of the machinery could be plainly heard. But Mrs. Lyndendaal, the President, and Mr. Silverton, Vice-President and Treasurer, were far above objecting to any minor physical dis-

turbance, if it added but one gross to the sales of CRUMPLE CAKES. And yet they didn't seem as if they'd be like that—either of them. They would seem as if everything which might interfere with the clear functioning of their minds must be avoided. But the revolving sign had been conceived in their minds, and therefore was sacred.

They were an odd couple enough, to be at the head of a great business. They were so young. There were differences in youth. They didn't remind Martin at all of his own youth. Martin, at Silverton's age, would have been incapable of a close and continued association with a good-looking woman, without elements entering into that association which had nothing to do with business. Silverton, married to Sarah, evidently took no interest in Martha whatever, apart from business. Martha, who was now not married to anyone, seemed to have put away all thought of love or marriage, much as a person—on reaching maturity—might put away all childish things. It had been with Martha a phase, and the phase was over.

And yet Martin was a little jealous of Silverton. He sometimes thought the Jew understood Martha better than he himself understood her. The two minds seemed as interdependent as the cylinders of an engine. They needed each other, because of the added power each could bring. Possibly they feared each other, and were thus spurred to extra effort because of the delicate adjustment of their relative importance, which might at any moment be swung to either side. They admired each other, because each was in a position to evaluate the other's qualities. And just a little, Martin sometimes thought, they hated each other. But never for an instant, Martin felt sure, was their need, their fear, their admiration or their hate permitted to break through the cold and delicate perfection which was their relationship. He had happened to be present once at their meeting in the morning, and they might have been strangers meeting for the

second time. Except that strangers would never have been able to cast aside preliminaries so quickly, and discuss affairs of state with such a precise knowledge of what had been discussed before.

CRUMPLE CAKES had been through many stages of development since the days of Morris Silvertown's apprenticeship—almost as many as had Silvertown himself. It might be recalled that even Sarah had not known him at the beginning. She had met him first on the steps of a church where he wouldn't have been standing if he hadn't already reached a certain eminence.

But whatever Silvertown once had been, he was now a very fine gentleman. His clothes were woven and tailored by masters of their craft, his very shoes were delicate and fine. He had about him an aura of fortune, though—at this time—his fortune was in itself hardly of a measure to cast an aura. He might have worn, though he did not, an eccentric jewel, and on him it would have passed unnoticed. He might have worn that fiery cross of a ring, which was reputed to have belonged to an emperor. It was Martha, instead, who wore the ring, day and night—Martin had never seen her without it since it had come into her possession—day and night, like a cross she had been willed to bear. It was on the fourth finger of her right hand, and Martin, pressing that hand in greeting or farewell, had often felt the hard-faceted pattern cutting into his palm.

Yes, Silvertown should have had that ring. It would have suited him. And it wouldn't have mattered—not to Martin, anyway—if he had borne the cross. Silvertown was a potentate, with all the qualities peculiar to potentates. And a power which must have been bred in him, because he was still so young. He was fastidious to a degree. What better proof of that could there be than his marriage to Sarah? Such a man would be content only with charm of the highest order. The rooms of his apartment were as calculated and as perfect in

their effect as stage settings. His was one of those rare existences, unclouded by error, and Martin felt that the young man was indeed fortunate to have reached so early to the objectives of such an existence. Naturally, all this was a state which had been attained, and continued to be attained, through the most arduous labor. And as for errors, without him, Martha might have made them.

Hers was, in business at least, an adventuring spirit. She would have taken chances which Silverton refused. Martin, realizing that his memory of such matters was apt to carry him on a bit beyond these few years upon which he was now trying to concentrate his thought, remembered Martha's tendency to plunge. She bought up plants all over the east, modernized them, arranged her distribution so that cakes could be delivered within a few hours of baking to almost any point on the Middle Atlantic Seaboard. The plant in Brooklyn served partly as a school where bakers were trained to make the cakes exactly as they always had been made. There was no allowance for local preferences, as was so frequently the case in large concerns. There were imitators. But they couldn't copy the name, and much money was spent on teaching the public not to accept substitutes. Money was spent, but the profits were increasingly substantial. Interest was always paid on Martin's loan, and dividends on his and Anna's shares of stock.

It struck Martin that Martha had at last found a mate. Oh, not Morris Silverton, but a mate even more platonic. It was true, what Julian had once said of her, that with her success came first. She was married to her own success as irrevocably as marriage could be sealed on earth or in heaven. It was the sort of marriage that takes place when nuns are dressed in bridal garb, and swear to be ever faithful to the Son of God. A woman such as Martha could be for no mortal man. Or perhaps she had tried mortality and found it wanting. This success of hers, founded as it was on the most perish-

able of commodities, was yet in itself something not to be destroyed or touched. It was written in her stars.

Martin had been a fool, that he hadn't persuaded her to come to work for him. But what could a woman do with steel? Well, there was old Bertha Krupp, after whom the gun, Big Bertha, had been named. Had Fräulein Krupp been a figurehead? Not exactly, though she'd known little about steel. She had built workmen's villages, with red-tiled roofs. Martin could hardly imagine Martha's doing that. But Fräulein Krupp had inherited the Krupp steel works. What had Martha inherited, save a ring, and her own mind and her own body?

Body and mind . . . Julian had had the one, and now Silverton had the other. What did Martin have, except a kind of friendship with this woman whose benefactor he was? Not that he felt her indebtedness. She had discharged that by her existence in the same world with him. At one time they had been very close. They were close no longer. Was it this success of hers which had come between them, or was it something else? There had been a day when Martha had sat across the table from Martin and admitted that in the past she had loved him, and it was just something foolish, she had said. She had transferred her love to Julian. And now there was no love in her, neither for him nor for Julian nor for anyone. She wasn't human, that was the trouble, she wasn't mortal. If it were written in the stars of Martha Christiansen that her success was indestructible, it was written in the stars of Martin Lyndendaal that the women he loved were not made of flesh and blood. He himself was warm, he himself was human, and these women—he sought in vain for what they were. Wasn't his life's obeisance before his holy metal part of the same obsession? He worshipped strength. It drew him, magnet-wise, possibly to his own destruction. Would he have rescued the child, Matthew, if he hadn't been impressed with his superior qualities—if he'd been weak and puny? Martin knew that he would not.

And now Matthew was being raised for Martin's pleasure with a degree of intelligent care rarely used in the management of the young. He lived simply, with wealth veiled before him to display only its advantages. He had for his sight, one by one, examples of all the virtues—domestic or otherwise. People who knew, or didn't know, or thought they knew, the circumstances of his birth, sometimes said that it would have been better for the boy if these circumstances had been different. None could have been better for Matthew, in the long view, than the ones upon which he had fallen. It was as if the waters of the sin which had given him life had parted for him to pass, themselves rushing on to an inundation in which he was never concerned. His grandfather was tremendously proud of him.

But you couldn't live by pride. Not even now you couldn't, when you had nothing left to do but sit in a big chair and play solitaire and look out of the window. And at that other time there was plenty left to do. Right up to the turn of the decade, right up to the crash of 1929, and after, there had been plenty left to do. Martin had lived then, not by pride, but by a sort of second or third wind of tremendous activity. He had defined this period as a period of things, as against people, and then seemingly put people first. Through things—he had thought of it in this way—could human progress be discerned. His own progress—Martha's.

That fine edifice, the Baker Building, surely was a symbol of the progress of everyone. There was his own boarded house, closed like a bank on a holiday, and wired with burglar alarms till even he himself couldn't enter, unaccompanied by an authorized expert who understood the wiring. That was a symbol, surely, if not of progress, at least of change. The house was closed for several years. Martin had no wish to live there by himself. Either Fanny or Sarah would have taken him in, and Anna too, but his independence—and theirs—was preferable. There were hotels which made a specialty of catering to such men as Martin, and he and Eric

were very comfortable in a suite of rooms—quiet, clean and sunny—and furnished with a selected few of Martin's most valued possessions. So that made something else which was inanimate, and yet affected life. The place was run with the same smooth efficiency which Frances had attained in the big house. Besides, Martin was away so much, keeping that house going wouldn't have been worth while.

And, last of all, there were his mills, both new and old. There was his first plant in New Jersey, which had been built over and added to so many times it would never have been recognizable as his first. There were the works near Jamaica, and his new plant in the general direction of Pittsburgh, and another new place in Michigan, convenient to the present largest consumers of steel, the makers of automobiles. He came to a working agreement with Rosch. They did their buying of raw materials together. If this decade of the twenties roared, and so it was said to do, they roared with it—right in the van, right in the face of younger rivals who would have cut their throats if they could. They became known—which appellation was flattering neither to Rosch nor to Martin—as the Two Old Men. Since that time, Martin believed that the number of Old Men had grown.

And there was Little Steel and Big Steel. They were Little Steel—not flattering either. They were not the biggest of the Corporations. They worked as independently, even of each other, as it was possible to work at all. The fight which had always been in them was still present. They were rivals. But against Big Steel, or the younger men, they presented a united front. It was said there were numerous of these young ones who would have given them both a handsome pension on their signed agreement to retire. You couldn't live by pride, but there was a pride of age which could be pitted against all comers. A pride which would seem to oppose any willingness to keep abreast of the changing times. It didn't work out that way. Martin and Rosch were practical men, not bankers

or lawyers, or men who had got into their profession through family connections. They knew steel; therefore—for them—it changed naturally, being always in a state of flux.

They were in the habit of dealing with engineers and chemists and technical men of all sorts, who knew even more than they did. They were unfrightened by certain self-evident facts, such as that the railroads were every year pulling up more rails than they were laying down. You could place a rail on the ground and it didn't matter what it weighed. The same held true to a great extent for structural shapes. Rails and buildings were not movable, either cheaply or dearly, according to their weight. Steel was heavy. Tonnage—that was its measure. Tonnage must be thinly spread in order to conform to the new demands of movable objects, such as planes and cars and even trains. And, for thinness and movement, it must be very strong—tough and resistant—resistant to shock. Plants built to make heavy steels reported annual deficits. The financial men back of such plants were slow to sanction the needed changes, not knowing steel, and often not knowing markets either—merely money.

It was a ponderous business altogether, not alone the machinery and the metal, but the minds of men. Men like Martin and like Rosch, who were the unconstitutional monarchs of their realms, with controlling interests vested in themselves, didn't always have to wait to ask a banker or a lawyer or an investor what they should do. They could ask if they wished to ask, but they didn't have to. If they had a question it was put to the technical men, the chemists and the engineers, the men who knew more than they did.

Martin, who had never had any formal education since he was sixteen, was at one time the possessor of as fine a metallurgical laboratory as could be found. Naturally, the work done there was for the use of his own plants, and—still more naturally—he didn't do this work himself. He hired it done

by the best talent available, and at the best pay. It was getting at the problem of steel backside foremost, it seemed to him, to study it by means of charts and a series of lines which indicated the temperatures at which the alloys underwent changes. But it was getting at it, which was all that counted. Something else counted, too, though it had no connection with the problem immediately at hand. Watching these men work, listening to them talk, Martin gained an insight into the minds of a type of men whom he would never, otherwise, have got to know.

Much was said, in these days, about a future world to be ruled by scientists. The progress of the world had been so largely technical that technicians of any sort were placed upon a pinnacle. If a man could look through a microscope and understand what the lens showed him, it was often believed that the whole of human living should be placed in his hands. It must be the scientist, so this school of thought held, who would have to take over the economic system. If the control switches of a mechanized nation should be deserted by their keepers, such a nation would rapidly become prey to all the evils. There would be pestilence and famine and sudden death. These keepers knew how to run complicated machines—therefore they had an altogether realistic perception of everything, including their own importance and their own judgment. It was the scientific attitude—growing, so it was said. Martin got a good look at the scientific attitude, during those years when he spent any free time he had in his own laboratory. And there was a cog missing somewhere. The world was not a machine—that may have been the answer.

Martin's admiration of the scientist, the technical man of any type, was always very great. He was impressed by the exactitude of his knowledge. Even among the engineers there were men who knew so much more than he did about any one mechanical device. Perhaps engineering was not a

science. Mathematics was. And yet mathematics played its part in engineering. There was chemistry. There was geology. All of these, in Martin's field, were intertwined. And each of them had at its command a dozen qualifying and limiting adjectives. Beyond these, there were as many other branches of science with which Martin had no direct contact whatever. No one human lifetime could be long enough to take in the completed picture, but must concentrate more and more narrowly. That supreme concentration affected the brain, surrounded it with a sort of wall.

It was unthinkable to Martin, and the more he knew of these men—these scientists—the more unthinkable it became, that the whole world should be ruled by any dozen or any hundred or any thousand of such walled intelligences. The value of the knowledge men like that could bring would be tremendous and important, but it could not stand alone—not even by the dozen or the hundred or the thousand could it stand. It would be like a mass of raw materials. Who could blend it to a serviceable whole?

That the common man, in mass, the man without this curiously trained brain, should do so, was perhaps the final theory of democracy. Democracy, Cousin Henry had once assured Martin, was something which didn't exist. Should the world be ruled then by men like himself and Rosch, who already hired brains, such as the ones in question, for their own ends? For their own ends—that was the catch. Should some god-like creature sitting alone upon a mountain-top, lost in contemplation of the eternal verities, be the superman selected to prevail? Selected by whom? And would such contemplation fit a man for this supreme power? Even the popes picked by the college of cardinals to command the strictly spiritual welfare of a numerically large population were, Martin had observed, men of considerable practical ability. If the world were not a machine, neither was it a mountain-top. It was the system of created things, the scene

of life. And no one man—or dozen or hundred or thousand—could know all there was to know about it. Perhaps the scientists had the right of it, after all, staring into a microscope for segregations and fusions and the complex structure of alloys. That would be truth, as far as it went, or at least a small and exceedingly useful embodiment of truth.

Martin himself preferred a larger bulk. His whole life had been geared to a certain size—great rooms, great buildings, plants which were measured not in feet but in acreage. Though it might be merely an illusion of size—his own illusion—like the one created by the white glow surrounding a furnace, which made any human figure suddenly colossal. Among Martin's almost daily sights were enormous streams of molten metal, and ladles and mixers all scaled to serve this giant's soup which had been brought from the earth and must be made now to cover it. There was space in the mills. That was what Martin loved—space.

The twilight which came in to him here through his windows was a small twilight. And yet the windows were not small, as windows went. He yearned for the long vistas of twilight to which, in the mills, he had grown accustomed. It would be like that as far as the eye could reach, with what light there was trickling down uncertainly through the openings in the high domed roof and the interspaced structure of the walls. Here and there would come a glow from a fire burning casually, encased in its carrier. This casual quality was superimposed over everything—casual and deliberate all at once. And yet there was nothing either deliberate or casual about any process present. There was a planned haste throughout. But thinking back, and having for it a freshness of vision, as a man might keep a memory of something he had seen but once, that was the impression Martin retained.

Machines, of themselves, were in control, and machines must function in their own time. Engines, puffing a little, as

a man might puff before he had attained the mountain-top, ambled along on some track seemingly of their own choice. People who didn't know thought of a steel mill as seething with movement and loud with noise. This might have been true in the days of man power. But now power had gone far beyond man. A mill was quiet. There was never any more movement than was needed for a given task. And, for some tasks, all movement stopped. There was the mixer, suspended half-way towards the roof, which stopped and waited till one of the engines had paused beneath it—or a little to one side—and then, and then only, opened very slowly with that curiously human action of opening its mouth. The engine drew cars which held the ladles. Into them the mixer disgorged its red and cooling stream. The engine went on.

It was hard for Martin to remember that all this had started in the mind of man. Because the men, so lurking and so hidden, the men who threw a switch or signalled or merely watched, seemed always to be serving that which had outgrown any command they might give. These men were not scientists. They were not even engineers. They were laborers, skilled mechanics, with a certain training and a certain experience which assured them of well paid and steady work. In this mechanized world, they replaced the men such as Martin and Axel had discussed that day on the steamer. The two cousins had stood on that second cabin deck, looking down to the mass of them on the steerage deck below, and Martin's faith in himself had suddenly stretched out beyond all reasonable bounds. He had told Axel the men down there would be useful. In this new world they wouldn't be so useful. That, in Martin's view, was the great—the essential—change wrought by machines. It wasn't a view that was particularly startling, but Martin had been one of the first to see it.

He employed less men and better men than any of his competitors. Not believing wholly in a mechanized world,

he furthered it in every way he could. Keeping up with the times, Charlie Rosch called it. Martin considered that he had a little the edge on Rosch in this endeavor. And he knew a little more about steel. Rosch was a shade more spectacular as a salesman. That's what he should have been, Martin told him, a traveling salesman. Steel was just a side line.

"Anyone would think, to hear you talk," Rosch said, "that you never got a contract!"

"I get 'em on quality. My stuff's so high grade it spoils the market for anything else."

But nothing could spoil the market during those years. It was a new era of buying and selling. There was mass production on a scale, a thriving export trade, new and appealing articles—such as radios and cheap automobiles and electrical devices—and, generally speaking, a high wage level and liberal credits. Rich men, such as Rosch and Martin, made more money than they could possibly spend. The merely well-to-do lived better than they had ever lived before. You didn't hear very much about the poor. They were the slack which had to be taken up, and was taken up to a great degree, by a type of work with which Martin—personally—had very little to do.

It was the work done in mills and factories employing seasonal labor, a nondescript and floating rank who could yet tighten hub caps or spray paint. These men took their places on what was known as the assembly line. Martin's friend, Henry Ford, showed this system off to Martin in all its high perfection. No man ever had to use more than one simple tool. All the work came to him, waist-high. A man never had to move his feet or to stoop. The speed was not his speed, but the speed of the conveyor. Such men had nothing to do with scientific endeavor of any sort. They were not in question as rulers of the world.

But, if the scientists ruled, Martin had an idea that these unskilled and unfavored workers would eventually be born

lacking feet—lacking everything save a pair of prehensile hands. It would be a civilization purely functional, from the highest to the lowest. It would have no place for men like himself or Rosch or Morris Silverton, or for the young Matthew, who was being given—as far as possible—a complete and rounded education. The young Matthew, who asked questions, and got in fights, and was strong and handsome, and was filled with the fierceness of the Tatars and the thrift of the Danes and the cold intelligence of the Calvertons. Why raise a boy like that, if his qualities were nothing that the world could use?

All that was ten years ago, and more. And during those ten years the probabilities had changed.

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Sarah gave birth to a boy. They named him Martin. He was small and rather delicate. He was the youngest of the Lyndendaal grandchildren. Sylvia, his half-sister, was the oldest, being older than Matthew by some ten months. Fanny had two boys, and that was all there were, or all there ever would be, of that generation. Fanny's sons were the only blond ones. They were blue-eyed, light-haired. Hazzard Blue was of Irish descent, so there was no Latin or oriental or Magyar in their close ancestry. They were nice boys, Fanny's boys. Martin never got to know them very well, though they were brought to see him on state occasions, and sometimes in between, until the Blues migrated to Hollywood. When they were little they were as alike as two steps of a staircase, Harry being the higher step, Frank the one beneath. Harry was twenty now, in 1939, and a Junior at Yale. Frank was getting ready for Yale in his final year at boarding school.

Both boys being in the east at the present time, they came

to call on their grandfather in a very dutiful way at least twice a year, though obviously ill-at-ease in his presence. They had their father's looks but not his talent. Martin couldn't see anything of himself in them at all, though they were tall and heavy-set. Being as big as they were, it was rather unexpected that they moved as gracefully and lightly as Hazzard did. It made you notice them, when otherwise you might not have. They both were making something of a name for themselves in athletics. Fanny had never been very clever, but she got what she wanted. Her boys had that already, in so far as Martin knew. Harry was very much interested in aviation, and owned a plane. That was to be his career, he said. Martin didn't doubt it for a moment. Frank hadn't decided yet, what he was going to do. He liked sound.

"Music?"

"No. Sound. You know—the talking part of pictures."

The boy said Harry's racket was too risky, what with the war and all. He was just sticking his neck out for trouble. He had only a student's license now, but it would be no trick at all for him to get his final training and then . . .

No one went into the matter beyond that. The boys weren't particularly vocal.

Their cousin, little Martin Silverton, had been born, when was it? In 'twenty-six or 'twenty-seven? It must have been at about that time, because it was for the benefit of this delicate infant that Sarah changed her mind about opening the Newport house again. Martin was there for a few days of rest, and found her living very quietly. Silverton came down only occasionally. There had been some slight unpleasantness about his presence at the Newport Casino. After all, Silverton was a Jew, and made no denial of it, and was—at that time—not of sufficient importance to make it immaterial, what he was. The thing would never have happened if Frances had been alive. Martin was not given the details, and was asked by his son-in-law to do nothing about it any-

way. The whole vague incident was a blessing in disguise. As no one was to use the Newport house—the Silvertons would not return another season, and Martin certainly wouldn't, by himself—it was put up for sale at the height of the boom days. It brought an excellent price—about three times what it would have brought a few years later. It was the first of the Lyndendaal possessions to be sold. Up to then it had been only buying.

Martin hadn't bought as much as some men had. There had been too many occasions upon which Frances had stayed his hand. But still, his needs had been, to date, rather overmet. For his own use, a man could own just so much. The Lake Museum was one thing—that was public property. You could buy, you could sell, you could give away. Or you could invest your money, as Martin began to do again, in stocks. He owned a great many stocks. They were an easy thing to own—not like yachts and houses and pictures. You could buy them and forget about them until they rose, and then you could sell them and buy more. And he put a second million into CRUMPLE CAKES.

For Charlie Rosch, the spending of his money wasn't such a problem. Rosch's wife had died, which removed from him all vestige of caution in regard to his personal life, and he went in for women in a big way. Women of the type Rosch went in for made no problem at all of Rosch's surplus cash. Martin was no angel, but that kind of thing bored him—at least on a scale it did. He preferred to let his foot slip with less premeditation, giving the thing at least an illusion of equality. He might be getting old but he still had his vanity—not to be fed in quite the way that Rosch fed his. Rosch regarded women as something for display, something on the arm, as it were—that is to say, these women. Martin suspected that in a good many instances they were for display only. Which was undoubtedly all right with them. Rosch was older than Martin was. He covered them with sable and platinum

from head to foot, and they didn't mind that either. His opera singer had started in this way, but she had something about her—something more—she lasted. What Rosch gave her, you felt, in a material way, wasn't all there was to it for her.

The woman Rosch loved was dead, and he'd never given her anything at all except a wedding present and, from time to time, a few flowers. The woman Martin loved was very much alive, and he'd placed millions at her disposal, but not in any payment for anything. You couldn't count the millions as a gift. He received from them some eighty thousand dollars a year, plus the dividends on the CRUMPLE CAKE stock he owned.

One way in which Martin and Rosch spent their money was in income taxes. That must have been a source of satisfaction to little Calvin Coolidge, sitting in the White House, never speaking, letting everything alone, and attending ably to the routine of his office. The odds against Coolidge ever becoming president of the United States had been tremendous, even when he had begun to go up in the world. That was one of the qualities characteristic of this country—you never could tell. Coolidge's predecessor, Harding, had been another man for whom this honor had been most unlikely. Harding had been quite a close friend of Charlie Rosch. Rosch had a lot of close friends. People were inclined to underestimate Coolidge, Martin thought. He was shrewd, if with a kind of shrewdness which usually didn't get its possessor quite so high up. It was said that while he was president he had saved part of his salary. He was the only man who had ever done it.

Martin saved, too, but he wasn't in the White House, and perhaps you couldn't call it saving, to buy stocks at figures bearing no relation to their earning power. It was some time in 1928 that Fleetwood told him his position was precarious. Why should it be? Rather to his surprise, he had seen from

some newspaper statistics that he was listed as one of the ten richest men in the country. What did Fleetwood know about it, anyway? Fleetwood was a lawyer, not a financial man. And, besides, if Martin did lose some of his money, it wouldn't matter very much. There was always plenty more where that came from. And Martin didn't care about money as such—not the way Tom Fleetwood did. Tom was getting eccentric on the subject. He kept his loose change in a little purse. He had \$7,500 (the legal limit) in every savings bank in New York, and non-fluctuating government bonds, too. He went to Europe on a four-day boat, third class. Emily, his wife, Frances's sister, was thin like all the Calverton women except Fanny Blue, but Martin wondered if—in Emily's case—it might be something more than a question of inheritance. It was possible that she didn't get enough to eat. He was quite sure the Fleetwood servants fared sparsely.

Tom Fleetwood, more and more, became associated with a circle of rich men a bit on the Methodist or Baptist side. They certainly didn't go in for women—barely spoke to them, except to their wives and other female relatives. They rose early every Sunday morning and taught Sunday school. They considered every man entitled to Thrift, Industry and the Pursuit of Bargaining. They watched the meter in a taxicab, and would get out blocks from where they wanted to go in order to save the clocking of an extra nickel. They didn't ride in taxicabs much. They didn't have to. They most of them owned large cars of ancient vintage. Their money brought them one advantage, and one only. They could do exactly as they pleased, and pinching pennies was what it pleased them to do.

So Martin didn't pay much attention to his brother-in-law's warning. Fleetwood was always crying wolf—predicting disaster. He gloated over the thought of it. He would be safe, of course, and men like Martin and the others would get their come-uppance. That was a good Yankee term for receiv-

ing the punishment which was your due. If you sinned you would burn in hell, and the little imps would prod you, and the devil would build his fires high. So be it. Men such as Fleetwood blamed men such as Martin for everything that happened. They had been careless, like children who play with matches and set the house on fire. They had respected neither God nor Mammon. The crash of 1929, and the years that followed this panic to end all panics, were a series of lightning bolts aimed directly at Martin and his friends, to teach them a lesson they had been slow in learning. It was too bad that the innocent bystander also suffered, but it couldn't be helped.

In Martin's opinion, the innocent bystander wasn't quite so innocent as he appeared. There was far too much general speculation going on. People took money they couldn't afford to gamble with, and—lured by quick profits—went on gambling. The market grew top-heavy. It was a house of cards, built too high, and it fell down. Within a few days the total quoted value of stocks on the New York Exchange fell thirty billion dollars. Thirty billions—it had all been there on paper, and then suddenly it was gone. There was something magical about it—a white rabbit disappearing from a magician's hat. But the rabbit could usually be found somewhere beneath the magician's coat tails. This rabbit was gone forever.

There had been warnings other than Fleetwood's. Conditions of a strictly industrial nature hadn't been quite so good for a full year before the crash came, but there was so much money being made that Martin hardly noticed it. New uses for steel were coming up all the time, ready to fill the holes left vacant by glutted markets. Martin was inclined to take issue with Fleetwood on a number of points—one point in particular. Martin not only disclaimed his own and his associates' responsibility in regard to what had occurred—he considered that the trouble was staved off by their con-

fidence. If it had not been for Martin and such men as he, with their incurably boyish optimism, their refusal to treat with difficulties from a prisonhouse of fear, things would have been worse.

Martin was out of town on that Tuesday in October. He had business in Youngstown, Ohio, and was attending to it. It was possibly the most expensive attention of his career, if his hourly loss in money could be reckoned as what it cost. Telephone calls kept following him about from brokers and from Miss Bellows and from this person and that person, and long specific telegrams. Towards evening it was borne in on him that he better go home. Though what anyone expected him to do when he got there wasn't at all apparent. All day he'd been asked for instructions. What instructions could he give except to hang on? Stocks would go up again.

His brokers were reliable. He was wholly in the hands of his brokers—practical financial men, allegedly experts. He had formed the habit of depending a little too much on the advice of experts, advice sound enough in engineering. It didn't seem to be so good in Wall Street. When a machine didn't work, the men who made it usually could find out why, and build another one correcting its faults. And they weren't taken entirely by surprise. Such things happened—they were tangible—they could be fixed. But these inflated values merely disappeared, and there was nothing to fix. The practical financial men had nothing left to look at but the expensive furnishings of their offices. Expensive furnishings were a dime a dozen in the years to come.

Martin ought to have sold, heavily, and at once. By following this course he could have collected quite a sum of money for himself, which would have been very useful in the steel business, which was his business. It hadn't been his business to pour in money to a falling market. He fancied himself as one of a group of men who would save the day. He was calm. He was a figure of strength in the midst of

dilemma, and he was a fatuous fool bailing out a sinking ship with a tin dipper and expecting the waters of the sea not to get ahead of him. He undoubtedly did some good. The cost was somewhat out of line.

Having lost faith in the opinion of his brokers, he lost faith in the opinion of everyone else, including that of Morris Silvertown and Martha.

These two were sitting what was known as pretty, with their cake business, which had not been as yet seriously affected. Their working capital was in some gilt-edged chamber which the genius of Silvertown had devised for it. Sitting pretty, and buying up—as the months wore on—defunct or staggering plants, just to have them, always believing in a capacity ahead of requirements. People ate when they didn't buy automobiles. People ate when they didn't build skyscrapers or travel on railroads or construct factories for the manufacture of new products. Steel jammed of its own weight. CRUMPLE CAKES were light and fluffy and sweet and retailed at a nickel apiece. They provided Martin with a handsome income. He was lucky, that way. Because there seemed to be enough steel. It wasn't consumed in the same manner that food was. In some commodities prices could be slashed to bargain rates. But buyers don't pick up bargains—even attractive bargains—in steel, except with an immediate prospect of turning them over at a profit. And during the years immediately following, prospects of that type were rare enough. Even for Martin.

If Martin had been a young man, starting in, it might have been different. As it was different back in 1893, when he had come to New York on his own—as it was different in 1907, when he had had behind him the resources of a great corporation. Now he was out on a limb, and he was in a very bad way and, as the months and years followed, he knew it. Merely knowing it was what got him down, not all at once, but little by little and drop by drop. He'd never got

his nerve back—not wholly—not since then—except perhaps during this time which was the present time, while he was sitting in a chair because he couldn't stand.

He had to close down his fine new plant in Michigan, and also the one near Jamaica. There was no choice. It was like cutting off his right and left arm—no anaesthetic, no blood-stopping. He kept the Jersey meadows, and the works near Pittsburgh. They were not running to capacity, nor anywhere near to capacity, but they were running. They had never stopped running. He hoped they never would. Whatever had happened to Martin Lyndendaal himself, MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, had survived.

In 1928, Herbert Hoover had been elected president. Hoover was an engineer. But engineers might be wrong about matters they didn't understand. In 1930, Mr. Hoover stated that the depression would be over in sixty days. A few months later, in that same year, he stated that it was over. Later, he praised the soundness of the credit system and the wisdom of the bankers. Two months later, banks began to fail. They continued to collapse, with no money to pay their depositors. But Hoover could never get the prosperity complex out of his head. He was worse than Martin was. He advised everyone to keep going as if nothing had happened. He finally established a government-owned Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to be used in making loans to railroads and financial institutions. He ran for office again in 1932, and was defeated, though not as overwhelmingly as he might have been. Martin voted for him. Not that it mattered, or that anything that Martin did mattered very much at that time. Which was how he felt. It was his own private depression, eating right into the very fibre of his own private soul.

He had understood those earlier panics, at least sufficiently so that they had presented to him no problem which he must, eventually, give up trying to solve. This one was different, not alone in its relation to himself, but in its relation to

everyone else. There were learned solvers, right or wrong, and a great deal of talk about government control and its necessity. The talk made this seem like something new—something invented at the moment and for the moment. Government control was about as new as the Egyptian pyramids. Martin himself came from a country where such control had always been an exceedingly important factor. Here, in this country, Martin didn't know how far back it went. Within his own memory, old Teddy Roosevelt had started that ball rolling. In the year 1932, another Roosevelt was in the saddle. From 1932 on—right up to the present moment, and at least some space beyond it. Right up to Martin's present thinking, there was this same man, this second president named Roosevelt.

He had been thinking of the past—only of that—but the past was drawing nearer all the time. It was beginning to be confusing because it was so close. And sooner or later, past and present would come together, like two trains meeting. What happened after that was no concern of Martin's. Anything which happened—anything at all—must be left for those who followed him. Sometimes he regarded this time to come as a figure of extraordinary menace, and sometimes only in terms of menaces he had known in the past, which had loomed near, and threatened and receded.

But how could it recede—how could it? Russia had invaded Finland now, and the rest of the world seemed to be standing still and watching, or sitting, even as he was himself. But the rest of the world had ringside seats while he—Martin—was protected. People didn't want him to know about what was going on. It wasn't good for him. Callers were warned not to talk about it. He found that out from Benison, who had seemed suddenly extraordinarily ill-informed on matters of the moment.

"You see, Mr. Lyndendaal," Benison explained, "I don't want to be forbidden the house."

"Oh, are you searched for contraband every time you come here?"

"Not exactly. But you see there are so many things that you alone can tell me—"

"I can tell you about the Finns," said Martin. "They're tough customers—"

"Indeed they are! You see, you've been so awfully kind. It would be poor return for that kindness, to let you get in a stew about things you can't help."

"I see," said Martin.

He saw only too well. He was regarded—even by Benison, who had grown, in these present months, to know him better than anyone knew him—as a survivor of a period which did not concern this present world at all. His opinions—and time was when he had been asked them—were of historic interest only. It was just as well that he had turned down the publisher's offer—just as well that his antiquated fancies were not to be exposed to public ridicule. His children and his grandchildren would not have cared for that. Any book about him would be like a diary unearthed from a secret drawer in an old desk. As a case in point, for many years—1914 to '18, certainly—war had been his business. And now he was made to feel that it was not his business. His mills still bore his name, MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, and they were making steel there. But personally, Mr. Lyndendaal was retired. Personally, Mr. Lyndendaal was unapproachable—untouchable. The old war in which he had been concerned had a new name now. It wasn't even the Other War. It was War 1. This present war was War 2. There might be a certain confusion in Martin's mind, but he could still count beyond the number 2.

And meanwhile, he must pick among the confusion for the facts which had their bearing on his active life. He had always had so much to do, he had been so busy—far too busy to look out of the window at the winter sky, as he was look-

ing now. He must go back to the days of the panic. There was a peculiar fitness in such a sojourn. Because it was in those days, and the time following, that he had first realized that he himself was growing old—not middle-aged, but old. It was then that he knew that it took the peculiar agility of a Morris Silverton and the sheer brash youth of a Martha Christiansen to remain unscathed, no matter what happened—or at least, no matter what had happened. You couldn't guarantee the future. And Silverton and Martha were not so young now as they had been then. War, and possibly something worse. Youth might survive. Martin wouldn't have to survive. But they would be caught, right square in the middle.

These past years had gone so quickly. Or it might be that as you grew old you became more conscious of the terrific speed of time. These past years had been little more than the figures fed from a broker's ticker. Only one full year among them—this last one of all, since he'd been wholly confined within a few feet of space, since he could hardly move without aid, and since finally he must limit all vital living to the gathering of his thoughts and the attempt—already vain—to marshal them to some unit of comprehension.

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Well, in some things, Martin had still been lucky. He still had this room—he still had this house. He couldn't believe now, thinking back, that he had bent every effort not to have it. He had tried to sell this house of his, and the only thing which had saved him from doing so was that the price he could get wasn't good enough. It stood solid, like a fortress which the enemy guns couldn't demolish. So he gave up his expensive suite in the hotel and moved back there. He had Eric, of course, and Sarah procured him a sort of cook-house-keeper and a couple of maids and a houseman. He lived in

an oasis, encircled by unoccupied and empty rooms. Perhaps he had been unduly generous with Sarah in letting her take what she wanted. And perhaps he had been a shade careless about requiring the "documentary evidence," as Fleetwood called it, of her possession, before accepting his wife's right to will away to Fanny and to Emily certain pieces which, by being gone, contributed to the emptiness he noted. But there was enough left—more than any one man would ever need.

If it wasn't worth while to dispose of the house at too great a sacrifice, the case in regard to the *Dannebrog* was different. If he hadn't been able to sell his yacht, he would have given her away, the upkeep on that being out of all proportion to what he could afford. He got rid of the beautiful *Dannebrog* for what she would fetch, which was about the cost of her fittings. Martin knew that there were many people who would have thought him still a very rich man. But if it hadn't been for CRUMPLE CAKES even they wouldn't have thought that of him. If it hadn't been for CRUMPLE CAKES, for a while there he would have been living on the charity of his sons-in-law. He couldn't even have kept his mills running, the mills he had saved out of the wreckage.

He sold what he could. There was much he couldn't sell, and had no wish to sell, such as his responsibility for Matthew. The load of that was not a constant measure, such as iron would possess, or lead, but a live weight that pulled and eased, like the weight of his years. The years were made of flowing water. Time itself was fluid, it seemed to Martin. As for Matthew, at this particular time, the weight pulled. The boy was inclined to regard all his many advantages as accruing to him by virtue of some superiority innate in himself. It was a phase Matthew went through—just a phase—but while it lasted his conceit would have been insufferable if he hadn't been able, in spite of it, to make people like him.

He never misused his strength. He always did—within rea-

son—what Mother Anna told him to do. He made little extra trouble for the maid who did the housework under Mother Anna's direction, but picked up his possessions neatly and didn't track mud on the carpets. And when Aunt Martha came home after a hard day's work he knew, as it were instinctively, how she felt, and whether he could make a noise or must be quiet in order not to disturb her. It was important to have a care for such matters. Boys who hadn't figured it out were stupid, he confided to Martin.

Martha was living with Anna and Matthew in a big apartment on the Heights with a view of the harbor. She seemed to have got over her objection to seeing this boy who was Julian's child by another woman. Possibly it didn't mean anything to her any more. Martin suggested that they all come and live with him, but there were still limits to what Anna would do, and living in Martin's big house was evidently not within them. It would have been convenient enough. Matthew was going to a day school in New York. It was a fine school with a gymnasium and all sorts of athletic activities which used his tremendous surplus of energy. In the summer he and Anna went to the little house at the seaside with which Martin provided them. But you could see he was outgrowing Anna's care. Martin and Martha decided that he should go to boarding school. Anna was opposed to it, but what chance had Anna against Martin and Martha, and against Matthew himself, who wanted to go? The end was predetermined. It must be a school where there was no nonsense. Matthew was being groomed for a career into which nonsense didn't fit.

There had been entirely too much nonsense about the institutions of learning in which Martin's real son had gained his start in life. That was what was wrong with Julian—nonsense. It was why his name was never mentioned, except occasionally by Matthew himself. It was as if he were dead. He might as well have been. He had gone away, and not come back.

Matthew mentioned him because he heard things about him through the talk at school. It was natural he should hear, as the talk was that they were brothers. Martin was sure that Matthew believed this, and he couldn't tell him it wasn't true because the real truth must yet be kept secret. He was always afraid that Matthew would come out with the straight statement, "You are my father," which would have been difficult. But he never did. He talked, instead, of his Uncle Julian—*uncle*, despite the brotherhood.

"You knew Uncle Julian was married again, didn't you?"

"Yes, I knew—"

"His wife sings and dances the way Aunt Fanny's husband does."

"Not quite the way. Aunt Fanny's husband is a famous star."

"Well, maybe Uncle Julian's wife will grow to be famous, too, and then we will all know her, the way we know—"

"We couldn't very well know her, Matthew, whatever she became, because Aunt Martha might not want us to. When a man is married to one wife, and then to another, the two wives don't generally become friends."

"Yes, I guess you're right. Her name is Mme. Zari—she's in a show in London—"

"That's very interesting." Martin didn't find it interesting, as he knew it already. But you didn't dam up an avalanche by direct pressure. You diverted its course. To Matthew, thank God, the subject of Mme. Zari was a harmless abstraction. "I hope she stays in London," Martin continued. "It would be, I should think, the very best place for her."

"She won't. All actors come to Broadway, and then they go to Hollywood, like Aunt Fanny's husband. Mother Anna had a magazine which said that Aunt Fanny's husband was directing a picture there and dancing in it, too."

"Yes, I know—" The picture to which Matthew referred was one of Hazzard Blue's earlier Hollywood triumphs. At

the time of this discussion he had gone there but recently.

"Wouldn't it be funny?" Matthew asked.

"What would be funny?"

"If Uncle Julian's wife went to Hollywood and was in a picture that Aunt Fanny's husband directed? All in the family, as you might say!"

"Yes, all in the family."

"Wouldn't you be curious to see such a picture?"

"Why, I don't know—"

"I should be—"

Yes, it was full time that Matthew went to boarding school. A suitable one was finally decided upon. In addition to their book learning, the boys ran a farm which supplied the school with farm produce. They learned to work with their hands, lived simply, and those who could pay were leveled off to the line of many who went there on free scholarships. The school was a great success. Matthew returned for his Christmas vacation considerably subdued. There were evidently other boys who were as strong and as clever as he was.

Matthew's school left Anna without enough to do. She couldn't spend her entire time in knitting scarves for church benefits. She wanted Martha to give up the maid and let her do the housework again. But it didn't suit Martha's dignity to have her mother so occupied. And the girl was perfectly right. It wouldn't have done. Anna couldn't see it that way. It would be for her now as if the next thing would be for her to die, she told Martin, and she didn't want to die.

In good weather she went to Prospect Park and sat on a bench there with a bag of crumbs and fed the sparrows and watched the children playing. When Martha didn't need her car, it was at Anna's disposal, and she would be driven in it over to New York where she would do a little rather frugal shopping. She liked to go to Third Avenue, in the Thirties, where the Scandinavian food shops were. There was one place in particular, a delicatessen specializing in importations

which hadn't changed much, either in quality or kind, since Axel had spent most of his time in a cellar opening kegs of fish and pickles. The very smell of the place took her back, she told Martin. It was the smell—or the divine scent—which had always clung faintly to Axel's clothes and—however faint—had managed to rout from his widow's consciousness the later odor of disinfectants with which he had become imbued. Salt and vinegar and fish and cheese and spice, it was, with something of the sea about it and the farm, and country which Anna had given up hope of ever setting foot in again. If the *Dannebrog* had not been gone, she might, but not as things were.

"Would you like to go back to Denmark?" Martin asked her.

"I know my duty."

Anna was a great one for duty.

"Which is—"

"My place is with Martha. She is alone in the world also. You don't for a moment fancy that she would go back to Denmark, do you?"

"How could she? She's never been there in the first place!"

"It would be different," said Anna, "if Martha were the marrying kind."

"Why, she's been married—"

"Oh, that! It never seemed to me like a marriage at all—just one of those things people don't talk about. I've been hoping she'd find someone else. Now if she were like her cousin, your daughter, Sarah—" Anna always cherished the most intense admiration for Sarah, knowing her but slightly. "Oh, don't think there haven't been men after her—plenty of them—but she isn't—"

"Having any?" Martin put in.

"No, she isn't."

"If she were, you might go home?"

"I might."

That was the first thing that was said about Anna's going home, but not the last. It was an idea, once launched, which grew. It was like a fly buzzing about in the minds of all of them. It went through a sort of prenatal period, and then suddenly it breathed air and had to be dealt with. The dealing came, characteristically enough, from Martha—news of it from Sarah.

"I suppose you know," Sarah said one night, "that Martha's left Brooklyn, and has moved, bag and baggage, to the Winderman."

"The Winderman?"

"Yes—that rather swanky apartment hotel that's still reasonably well down town. She moved yesterday."

Martin often had dinner with the Silvertons. He was having it now. His surprise at Sarah's statement was so intense that he swallowed a morsel of food the wrong way, and so couldn't press her for further detail. However, Sarah was not long in supplying him with it:

"She's taken a suite there—parlor, bedroom and bath."

"Her mother won't care for that, will she?"

"She won't mind. She's so busy packing."

"Oh, I suppose she stayed behind to close up the apartment. But when she's finished—"

"When she's finished, Mrs. Christiansen is going to Denmark for a long visit—probably to live forever. It seems some little farm her people owned has come up for sale and she's bought it—or is in the act of buying it. No use her staying here, as long as Martha prefers to live in a hotel."

"I didn't know she did prefer it," said Martin.

"Oh, yes, she made that very clear—"

"She said nothing to me."

"I don't imagine she wanted to bother you."

"Did you know," asked Morris Silvertson, changing the subject, "that the MAMMOTH people have made us an offer?"

"What kind of an offer?"

"They want to buy us out. They've been trying to imitate CRUMPLE CAKES for years, and haven't had much success."

"Are you thinking of selling?"

"No—I wouldn't put it as strongly as that." Silverton never put things strongly, or committed himself unnecessarily.

"I suppose in these times the MAMMOTH people are looking for bargains."

Silverton laughed. "I'm afraid, if they are, they're barking up the wrong tree as far as we're concerned!"

Martin's granddaughter, Sylvia Mattiabelli, had been sitting quietly eating her dinner. She now thrust a new question into the arena: "What will Matthew do—I mean, on his vacations—when Mother Anna goes away?"

"Don't you think my big house is big enough to hold him?" Martin answered her.

Sarah spoke: "I told Martha I should be glad to have him with us."

"Yes," said Sylvia, "I think that would be nice. What do you think, Grandpapa?"

Martin thought that they had all gone pretty far without consulting him. After all, what Matthew would do was distinctly Martin's business, and no one else's. He was a good deal put out about the whole thing, including the offer of the MAMMOTH, which they seemed to be—at the least—considering. Perhaps they hadn't wanted to bother him about that, either, or bother themselves with his advice. Silverton and Sarah, too, were both perfectly aware that he was angry. Though he said nothing. He left shortly afterwards, making the excuse that he was tired. He wasn't tired—never less so.

From a drugstore in the next block, he called Martha's hotel. Martha was out. Perhaps that was why she was so anxious to get rid of her mother—so that she would be free to come and go as she pleased! He called the Brooklyn apartment, and the servant answered. Mrs. Christiansen had gone to bed. Had Mrs. Lyndendaal been there? No.

Martin didn't have his car with him. The distance between his house and Sarah's was just a pleasant walk on a pleasant evening. But it was too far to walk to Court Street, to Brooklyn. And that's where Martha might be, if she wasn't anywhere else. At any rate, the Baker Building was worth trying. Martin hailed a taxi. From the bridge—it was Manhattan Bridge that the man had chosen—he could see the tower with its sign—CRUMPLE CAKES, INCORPORATED. WHENEVER THE HOUR OF HUNGER STRIKES—and the great clock. It wasn't late—only half-past-ten—and Martin certainly wasn't sleepy.

The night watchman greeted him: "Good evening, Mr. Lyndendaal—"

"Good evening. Do you happen to know if anyone's up at the CRUMPLE offices?"

"Yes, sir, Mrs. Lyndendaal's up there."

Well, perhaps there was a God, after all.

"Take me up, will you?"

"Certainly, sir."

They shot up in the express elevator. The elevator opened directly on the reception room, but the door leading to the inner offices was locked. At Martin's knock, footsteps sounded.

"Is that you, Martha? It's Martin."

Martha's voice—"Oh—"

The watchman, who had been waiting to see if everything was all right, shut his cage and went down. Martha let Martin in, and he followed her through to her private office. That was lighted. The rest of the place was in darkness. Martha's office contained a big leather easy-chair which Martin had sent there with an eye to his own use. He sank into it now.

Martha looked at him. "Has anything happened?"

"A great deal has happened! Shipping your mother off to Denmark—moving out of your apartment to a hotel—negotiating with the MAMMOTH BAKING COMPANY—"

"I see, and you think we ought to have told you—"

"It seems a little strange—so many changes—so many plans—and I am the last person to hear of them."

"We'd been talking about Mother's going—"

"Only in a general way—vaguely—"

"And as for the MAMMOTH, I haven't the slightest intention of selling."

"I suspect that Silverton's intentions are different—"

"Is that what he said?"

"No, but he wouldn't have said anything if he hadn't been greatly in favor of it."

"Yes, I know he's in favor of it," said Martha. "But it's for me to decide—not him."

"Of course, Martha, you decide everything. However, that's not what I came here to talk about."

"What did you come here to talk about?"

"About myself. And whether I was going to be thrown on the scrap heap, along with Julian and your mother."

"If there's any scrap heap," said Martha, "it's I who am on it—not they."

She certainly suggested no such position—nor any other ignominy—sitting as she was at her fine desk in her fine office, wearing a dress of the fresh bright woolen material she so often favored, and looking so young she might have passed for one of Sylvia's schoolmates. She looked little older than she had when Martin first had seen her—and when was that—fifteen years ago or more? The years had merely changed her and made her more lovely.

Martin didn't understand what she meant, and said so rather brusquely. Then, Martha:

"I didn't throw Julian and my mother on any scrap heap. I didn't throw them anywhere. Julian left me. Surely, you know all about that? He wanted to leave—don't you remember? He wanted to leave a long time before he was able to do so. And now Mother wants to leave. You wouldn't

have me try to keep people who want to get away? Or would you? Don't you think I have any pride?"

"It's a false pride. You lean over backwards because of it—"

She ignored this. "And why do you think Morris Silverton wants to sell out to the MAMMOTH? So he can leave, too. CRUMPLE CAKES isn't big enough for him any more. He's had offers to go elsewhere—offers of the most flattering nature. But it's not very flattering to myself, for me to be afraid that I couldn't run my business without him!"

The admissions of the ordinarily self-contained were more devastating, Martin had long ago discovered, than any habitual confession. They were embarrassing, they were so complete. They omitted nothing. They spared neither speaker nor listener. In the quiet that followed, Martin was aware of the faint clicking of the machinery which ran the sign and the vibration of the machinery connected with the clock. But Martha was not a machine, save as she showed herself to those she loved, so that they left her. He must be careful never by word or look, or act of any sort, to give her the excuse to foresee his own departure.

"Haven't you had flattering offers yourself, Martha?"

"Well—the MAMMOTH people would like to have me come with them. That would be part of the arrangement, if it were made, which of course it won't be. I'll manage—I don't know just how, but I'll manage."

"I meant offers of a slightly different kind—more personal."

"Oh—I see. There's a man I met not so very long ago, who wants me to give up everything and settle down to housekeeping and mink coats." She spoke lightly now. This was what people such as Martha did. They bared their souls briefly, and made haste to cover them up again against the cold of exposure. "The only trouble with that is, I don't like housekeeping, and if I wanted a mink coat, I could buy one for myself."

"But the personal element?" Martin insisted.

"There isn't any," said Martha, whatever she may have meant.

Martin asked a question then, seemingly irrelevant: "What are you doing with your furniture? I understand your mother's engaged in packing it up, but then what?"

Furniture, from her tone, was the least of Martha's troubles: "There are storage places for such things, aren't there? And Mother's taking some of it with her."

"Naturally, she would want to. I thought there might be certain things Matthew would like"—they hadn't mentioned Matthew, peculiarly enough—"things for his room. I thought I'd give him Julian's room. Matthew will have to have a place to come to—on his vacations."

"Oh, he'll like that! He always liked Julian. Though Sarah said something about having him with them."

She took it very much for granted, the disposition to be made of Matthew, as if it were unimportant, as if it were casual, attaching less consequence to the matter than some people would find in the placing of a dog. Speaking of dogs, Gustavus Adolphus, now well along in years, would be most welcomed by Eric, who was even now negotiating for one of his progeny.

"I thought he might pay the Silvertons a visit next summer," Martin suggested. "I know he liked Julian, but he likes Sarah, too."

"I know—he's one of her most ardent admirers." Martha was carrying the whole thing off with a rather high hand, except for that moment of truth-telling. "You take it up with Mother, about the furniture," she continued. "There surely would be nothing you yourself would want? It would hardly go with your magnificent pieces—antiques and such."

"Why not? And even if it didn't, I have plenty of space. There's a whole floor which Sarah once had—it's practically empty. It would save you storage bills."

"That's an idea. Take it up with Mother."

It struck Martin that here he was with Martha, as alone with her as he might have been on an island in the middle of the sea, and all he could find to talk about was the disposition of a few sticks of furniture. Well, it was a safe topic. They had skated over others far less so.

"I'm afraid your mother will find Denmark changed," Martin said. That was a safe topic, too.

"Perhaps. But she may not notice the changes. She'll see in it only what she remembers. I remember when she was over there on that extraordinary yachting party, she didn't notice the changes—not the way you did."

"But living there—running a farm—that will be different."

"Oh, she'll have help. She has two grandnephews who've just graduated from some government agricultural school."

"That will be convenient for her—and for them." He hoped Anna would not prove an easy mark for her welcoming relatives, what with her money and the burden of her years. "When does she plan to sail?" he asked.

"Oh, not quite yet. She has plenty of time."

"Of course," said Martin, "she has all the time there is. But isn't she afraid, starting off alone like that?"

Martha looked at him. "Why should she be?"

Yes, why should anybody ever be afraid of anything?

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Everything about the little ship was so clean and so white. It was almost like a yacht, almost like the *Dannebrog*. Anna had the best stateroom, and everything done for her comfort. She felt a little foolish, she told Martin, being made so much of. Who did they think she was—the Queen? And it was such an odd coincidence that a young man from Martin's office was on the same boat, and had business in the general

direction of the *Mariager Fjord*. This was where Anna would be met by her people. So she wouldn't be alone, after all, and certainly not now, with Martha and Martin and Matthew all milling about in her stateroom, which was piled high with bags and flowers and presents.

It was right that Anna should go home. What did it matter that Martha didn't really want her to go? And what could have been accomplished by Martin, what good served, if he'd told her this, at this last moment? If she didn't hear it from him, she would never hear it, and it was better so. Better for Anna. It was fair and just that Anna should be allowed full use of what life was left to her, and not be merely a funny old woman looking out of a window. Her work here was done—her duty was now to herself. But if she knew that Martha had no real wish to be left free of her she might still find her duty with her child. For his silence Martin was defending himself in his own mind all the time. Because, finally, Martin knew what he wanted. He wanted Martha in that big house of his. Martha's furniture had been an entering wedge—something he had thought of on the spur of the moment—a safe topic.

It was still safe enough. He had on the girl no dark and deep designs. He wasn't an evil old man, trying by trickery to gain ends which were evil. Just Martha's presence he wanted, nothing more. Just for her to see how he'd had Sarah's old rooms done over. It had been such a senseless undertaking, he had kept telling himself, and all in such a hurry, too, all in these past few weeks. It had been hard to know what Martha would like, because Martha had few preferences in such matters. Possibly she liked to live in a hotel. Possibly, she wouldn't care to change, even if it were made clear to her that there would be no housekeeping—and no mink coats, either, save any she might get for herself. What would be worse—to have her refuse, or to have her accept for any sense of obligation, or for any reason other than

her own wishing? Martin had his pride as well as the rest of them. So much pride going round.

It was as if, on this day of days, Martin were possessed of two wholly separated regards. One, focused on the things of the moment—the little happenings incidental to Anna's departure—and the other concerned wholly with what use he would make of that departure. For many years now he and Anna had been friends—good friends—and yet, in a way, she could not have been more vanquished by his easy and desirable silence, if they had still been enemies.

Matthew was getting to be a big boy. He had come down from school to see Anna off. He would have done that anyway, of course, so whether he fully realized that he would probably never see her again was something Martin didn't know. What difference could it make, since he had outgrown her care?

Walking along the narrow deck, the four of them together, they met a ship's officer who touched his cap and said, "*God daag!*" That was how do you do, or good day, in Danish. Martin and Anna replied in kind, and Martin commented that here the mother tongue was not a language you used only for the sake of memory, or because you were weary.

"But you mustn't forget English, Anna."

"Indeed, no! I must be able to read Matthew's letters—and Martha's, too—she speaks Danish very little now, much less writes it. And then I must be able to talk to them when they come to visit me on my farm."

"You better ask me to your farm," said Martin. "I would be of more use to you than they would. I have not forgotten how to milk a cow."

"Neither have I," said Matthew.

"Listen to the child—he never knew!"

"That's what I meant—"

Presently whistles were sharp in their ears, and those who had not taken passage were being hurried ashore.

"Well," said Martin.

Anna kissed Martha and Matthew. For a moment the boy was a little child again, and clung to her. She disengaged herself gently. "Be a good boy, Barn, and a credit to us all—"

Martin saw her press something into his palm, something she must have been holding ready all the time.

"Mind you be good, too, Mother," Martha warned. "Keep sober and don't play cards with strangers." There was a laugh at that, but Martin felt that Martha herself had little will to join it, even though its provision had been her obvious intention.

The young man from Martin's office stepped up. He gave them all assurance of his concentration on Mrs. Christiansen's comfort and safety.

Anna did an unexpected thing then. She placed her hands on Martin's shoulders and brought his face down to a level with her own and kissed him full on the mouth. It was a warm, fresh kiss. "*Farvel!*" she bade him.

"*Farvel—*"

"Come," said Martha.

Martin and Martha and Matthew walked, one after another, down the gang plank. It seemed to Martin, he was always doing that. All his life was punctuated by the comings and goings of ships. He stood on docks, waving farewells. He stood at deck-rails waving farewells. He embarked—he disembarked. He had started that course at the age of eight, and he was still at it. And this one was not the least important of such punctuations.

A man on the dock was selling apples. Matthew had bought one. He was eating it and waving it at Anna, as if to assure her of how good it was. He would continue to eat, even without her care. The gang plank was taken up. Everything was final, and soon the ship would move out into the river and the little group on the dock would turn away. Matthew was talking—he was always talking—and Martin rumbled responses.

He opened his hand. "See what Mother Anna gave me!"

It was a twenty dollar gold piece.

"Why," said Martha, "that's the gold piece that Mother had tucked away somewhere for a long time! Don't you remember, Cousin Martin? She wanted me to send it you, but I sent you a money order, instead."

"Yes, and you said it was lucky you chose the money order, because the twenty dollar bill was easier to frame. There was a message, too, if I remember rightly—a message I asked you to deliver her—"

"I believe there was—"

"I told you to tell her that when she had forgiven me, she could present the gold piece either to me or to mine."

"Had she a great deal to forgive you, Cousin Martin?"

"Up to this time, practically nothing." The coin had passed from one to the other of them. Martin now handed it back to its owner. "They're talking of putting through a law, Matthew, which will make it wrong to possess a gold piece like that."

"Why?"

Martha cut in—"Ask your Uncle Morris—he'll tell you all about it."

"Then I must hide it," said Matthew, "because it's mine and no one has the right to say it isn't, or that I can't have it! Mother Anna gave it to me—"

"That was very generous of her," said Martin.

"Yes, indeed," Martha agreed, "because it was a sort of keepsake—she found it once in the pocket of Father's coat."

"How did it get there?"

Martin took up the history of the gold piece: "It had been laid on a bar, the day Aunt Martha was born." This was an explanation hardly adequate, Martin realized, but Matthew had put the money into his own coat pocket now and was employed with matters more immediate—the bales and crates, bulky and mysterious, for which these smaller steamship lines

had no storage space separate from the passageway leading from the docks. "You must write and thank your Mother Anna—"

"I did thank her."

"We none of us thanked her," said Martin.

They were walking what seemed a long distance. And then Martin and Martha would get Matthew off to school again. He would have his dinner on the train. Matthew could always be depended upon for dinner under almost any circumstances. Where would Martin and Martha have theirs? Anywhere at all. They were footloose, free, no one to tell them anything. But it was a spurious sort of freedom. Martin was old and Martha was his daughter-in-law. And there was nothing, any more, that he could offer her that she could want. In the past, he had offered her a great deal. He hadn't called the money he had loaned her an investment. That it had proved to be so, and the only sound one he possessed, was Martin's luck. The thing was, of course, and wherein her debt to him lay, that no one else would have given or loaned or gambled a plugged nickel on her fortunes or the fortunes of CRUMPLE CAKES. He wouldn't have done it himself, if it hadn't been for how he felt about her father and, later, about her.

Her debt to him could never be reckoned in terms of money, but in faith and devotion and the imponderable articles of the spirit. Only in such ways could it be met, and its discharge was something you couldn't ask or mention or suggest. Martin couldn't go begging to her in his loneliness—or he wouldn't—and he couldn't be insistent and commanding, or put any kindness she might show him in the light of munificence or bounty. This was all about him now, like smothering feathers. Why, this car of his, waiting on Vanderbilt Avenue, so sleek and fine, with the man who—as they approached—sprang down and opened the door for them, would it have been here at all if it had not been for

Martha? Martin didn't see how it could have been. Therefore it was not his car, but hers. Everything was hers. He remembered how Julian had always regarded the money he made through selling cakes as not his money, to do with as he liked. Martin had never understood that. He understood it now.

"I'm going to the Plant," said Martha, "so I'll leave you. I'm taking the subway. It's the quickest."

"The subway's a jam at this hour—I can get you there almost as soon."

"All right—"

She would at least let him do that for her. This was another thing which seemed to Martin to happen over and over again—driving, with Martha beside him. He remembered that long drive the day of Frances's funeral, and the still longer one which had taken place only in his fancy, the first day upon which Martha had appeared upon the scene of his life.

"The MAMMOTH people are still after us," she told him, settling herself, lighting a cigarette, looking out at the street upon which dusk had lately fallen.

"I thought you weren't interested."

"They've raised their offer to quite an attractive figure. And I would go with them as General Manager of the CRUMPLE CAKE division."

"I thought you preferred being in business for yourself."

"That's a mere term, nowadays. I would have opportunities—it's rather a large concern—larger than we could ever be. In fact, I wouldn't consider it, except that I'm convinced that we've reached our limit of expansion. By the very nature of our product—"

"Of course," said Martin.

"Distribution's what stops us. It wouldn't stop the MAMMOTH. They have plants dotted all over the country. We'd have to build ours, except in our present area, and that

would take more capital than at this time we could possibly lay hands on."

"I'm sorry, I—"

"Oh, I know you couldn't! Besides, I wouldn't let you. It wouldn't be a sound investment at all! The MAMMOTH owns mills, sugar—flour—everything. They're even connected with a firm that manufactures motor trucks. They have everything—"

"And they'd have you, too, Martha, if you went in with them."

"If I went in with them," said Martha, "I'd have a little something myself."

"Such as—?"

"Two million dollars' worth of stock—a very generous salary as manager of my own product—a chance to work up in the biggest baking corporation in the country."

"It must be a considerable temptation."

Martha pondered this. "Oh, by the way, speaking of two millions, you'd get yours back—in cash if you wanted it—and the stock you own would be exchangeable for MAMMOTH stock. As one of our stockholders, you'd have to come to the stockholders' meeting we would call."

Martin was occupied with the subject of temptation. He couldn't think of any. Mechanically, his surface brain functioned and led him to a question: "Wouldn't your mother have to come?"

"We got her necessary signatures—her proxy to vote her stock—before she left, just in case—"

"I see," said Martin. The thing was more settled than he had feared. Women went away and they left behind them the trail of their power. The dead hand reaching out. Anna, who would soon be safe on her farm, signing papers in advance of the date for their use . . . He paused, and then—"This deal with MAMMOTH—is it dependent on your going with them?"

"I don't really know. Everyone's taken it for granted that

I should go with them. What else could I possibly do? Sit and twiddle my thumbs?"

"You've never worked for a big corporation, have you, Martha?"

"You know I haven't."

"I have. I'm afraid you wouldn't like it. You're not the type, as Hazzard Blue says in refusing to engage an actor he doesn't like." Martin wanted to be light about it, but Martha wasn't light.

"I could learn to like it, if the opportunity were big enough," she said.

"Having people over you," Martin went on, "telling you to do this and not to do that—having to defer to people who knew less than you did. It wouldn't matter what your position was, or what salary you were getting, you wouldn't like it."

From the set of Martha's mouth, Martin realized he had said a little too much, and antagonizing her was the last thing he desired. But he'd been perfectly honest in what he'd said. She wouldn't like it. She had run her own concern, she had built it up with his money and Silverton's brains to aid her, and it was very likely true that it had reached the limit of expansion. And now, partly because of this last, and partly for reasons at which Martin could only guess, she was planning to enter a world which nothing in her business experience had prepared her to enter. She was throwing herself, if not to the lions, at least into the dark forests of their habitation. She didn't lack for courage, certainly, but she had never lacked for it.

There was a spectacular quality in Martha, which would be a great part of her value to the MAMMOTH. She was the young and beautiful woman executive, fitting the role—speaking of Hazzard Blue—in the true motion picture manner. She could so readily be used in so many ways. Martin envisioned her as occupying an office even more elaborate than

her present one, and being interviewed by a press which the MAMMOTH would have more than sufficient power to summon. It would be success—her name in lights, as you might say—but there would be about it an element of falseness. Martha was giving herself over to an exploitation which she didn't understand. But this was not the moment to make it clear to her—or any clearer than he had made it. He had already said too much. He changed the subject, or the form of it:

"What's Morris Silvertown getting out of all this? You told me he'd had offers of the most flattering nature. Has he accepted one of them yet?"

"No—not yet."

Martin noticed that they had both abandoned any pretext of uncertainty. Once more, he changed the subject: "Who's the treasurer of MAMMOTH?"

"A man named Ellingsford. I've never met him. He's ill—he was in rather a serious accident a couple of months ago—his car turned over and he was pretty badly smashed. That's one thing that's delaying things. They've been waiting for him to get on his feet again. I understand he's a very brilliant man."

"So is Silvertown."

Martha looked at him. "They wouldn't want the two of us."

"I suppose not. Besides, there's no opening. Ellingsford's recovery is merely a matter of weeks now, I suppose."

"I suppose—"

Martin had had such high hopes of that afternoon, and here he was with Martha's destination but a few blocks away, and these hopes farther away than that, or than they had been at all. His accomplishment had been nil—unless you could call it such to find out certain things he hadn't known before. But it seemed his time for finding out things. After he left Martha at the baking plant, he stopped at a newsstand to pick

up an evening paper. An item in the lower left-hand corner of the front page caught his eye.

C. H. ELLINGSFORD PASSES

Charles Hanslow Ellingsford, First Vice-President and Treasurer of the Mammoth Baking Corporation, died at noon to-day at the Polyclinic Hospital, of injuries received . . .

"Just wait here a moment," Martin told his chauffeur.

The model plant of CRUMPLE CAKES was entered through an iron gate which opened on an alleyway running along the east side of the building. That was the way Martha had gone in, nodding to the guard who let her through. Fortunately, this man knew Martin, having once worked for him in Jamaica.

"This is Mr. Lyndendaal," he told the man at the entrance where the time clock was. From one watchman to the next, Martin was passed along. Outsiders weren't supposed to go wandering around in the plant like this, but Martin wasn't exactly an outsider. These were the hours between the day and night shifts. They were running on only two shifts at the present time, instead of the three of the boom days, but there were always certain activities in progress. Dough could never be left wholly to itself. Its processes were almost as necessarily continuous as those of steel.

The air in the mixing room was warm and sweet. Above the smooth steady humming of the motors that drove the machine, Martin could hear Martha's voice. She was talking with a man who was dressed in white from cap to shoes, as all the workmen here were dressed. In Martin's line, this man would have been called a foreman. Here he wasn't sure of his exact status. What Martin didn't know about the technical detail of the business which had become the chief source of his income would have filled a two volume textbook.

"If you're still having trouble with the flour from the Buffalo mill," Martha was saying, "I'll see that all further

orders are canceled, and also what they'll do about making good our losses to date."

The man was watching a little dial. He answered without turning his head—"O K, Mrs. Lyndendaal." He then spoke cryptically—"Ten minutes—"

"Ten minutes," Martha repeated.

Martin moved and she noticed him. She didn't seem surprised that he had followed her, after bidding her goodbye, such a short while before. She seemed, in this environment, incapable of surprise, but filled with something of that peace which is said to pass all understanding.

"Ten minutes?" Martin made a question of it.

"Why, in ten minutes," Martha explained, in the tone reserved for statement of the simpler facts, "the dough will spring out into the vats. It's quite a sight."

"I'm sure it is—" He handed her the newspaper, folded to display the announcement of Mr. Ellingsford's death.

She accepted the news casually enough. After all, only a moment ago she had said that she had never met Ellingsford. "Why—that's too bad! I was given to think he was getting better."

"He evidently had some sort of a relapse. You never can be sure in cases like that."

"No, of course not—"

The dough, coming out, was quite a sight, as Martha had said it would be. It filled each vat about half full. By midnight it would have risen to the top and be ready to knead—again by machines. But Martin had no intention of waiting for this further process. It was plain enough that Martha's visit to her plant had been merely an excuse to be rid of him. She had no business there urgent enough to take her at that hour. But she wasn't rid of him. Sensing the excuse, Martin still clung like the old man of the sea, not so much through his own will to cling as through a further sense he had that—for his own good, at least—he was doing the right

thing. The cards were falling his way a little now. He felt it as a gambler might. It was what men mean when they say "luck." There was bad luck and good luck. Either could lead you.

"I was thinking," said Martin.

"Yes?"

"I've seen your plant. I thought perhaps you'd return the call—come and see mine. I've been here before, but you've never been out to the Jersey mills—you've always been too busy."

"I haven't had dinner yet—"

"We can eat on our way."

"I suppose we could. But I've always had the impression that you thought a steel mill was no place for a woman." She had turned again to the account of Ellingsford's death.

There was something a little ghoulish in mention of dinner during such an occupation, but, after all, it had been Martha who had done that—not Martin. Besides, dinner was incidental. The mill was the important thing—Martin's mill. You could eat dinner three hundred and sixty-five nights in the year, but only once could you stake everything you ever wanted, or hoped to have, on taking Martha to see a sight which outshone any baking plant, or any spectacle such could provide. What did Martha like? Martin had kept thinking, for hours past, what this might be. What Martha liked was that which was larger than life. It was what he liked, too. And if, in the long view, there was no such thing—except as an extension of the power life unleashed—they were both marked with the same illusion.

But what Martha liked and what she wanted might not be the same. In his own case it wasn't—not quite the same. What Martin liked—oh, he liked many things. What he wanted was Martha. He wanted her, not as young men want women—or old men, either, for that matter—not as a man like Rosch wanted them, and he did himself, here and there

—but because, outside of Sarah, perhaps, and Matthew—she was the one human being left to him to care about. His struggle for her was like the struggle of a dying man to stay on earth.

They dined briefly in a place down town, with sawdust on the floor, on steaks cooked over charcoal and potatoes hashed and brown and coffee in thick white cups and deep rich pie with cheese on the plate. Prohibition was still in effect, but Martin obtained a drink. Prohibition was a farce—a bad and dangerous farce. They talked of that briefly, and the coming of repeal, which was now a certainty. It was a subject that interested neither of them very greatly. They talked of the new Roosevelt, who had been elected this past November. Martin had met him from time to time—at first, when he had been Assistant Secretary of the Navy during what, in this year of 1933, was referred to, between Martin and Martha, as the Great World War. For the most part, they didn't talk at all.

The chauffeur was having his dinner at a table down the room—not that it mattered, not that he could hear what they were saying. Martha spoke again of Ellingsford's death.

"Not that it will make any difference," she said.

She didn't mean that it wouldn't make any to Ellingsford himself, or to his wife and children, or even to the MAMMOTH. She was commenting, obviously, on the deal with CRUMPLE CAKES and her own future. But it might. Just possibly, it might. That was what Martin thought. And to him—Martin—it might make a difference. He wondered if Silverton knew about it yet. He undoubtedly did. Silverton was one of those men whose news is always fresh. It might make a difference to Silverton. They wouldn't want the two of them, Silverton and Martha, MAMMOTH wouldn't. The weight of talent would be too great. But the two of them hadn't been in question. There had been no opening for Silverton—just for Martha. But Martin didn't say any of this. He was being very careful what he said, as if he had dismissed all con-

troversial subjects from his mind—controversial to themselves. Prohibition—Roosevelt—good safe topics . . .

The mill was even more guarded than the bakery. It was like a prison. Gates locked behind you, as well as opened for your coming. Some of the buildings were closed down, but Martin's original plant—the one he had bought in 1893—was running. He had enough orders to keep the wheels turning—just enough. It was a good mill—modern, complete, with the best power driving and transport equipment, and the latest development in cranes. You wouldn't guess, to look at it, if you knew anything about such matters, that in 1893 it had been little more than a collection of ramshackle buildings. There was still a certain steady demand for structural shapes and Martin was again rolling them. He would have done this without such a demand, as a railroad sometimes runs a daily train over an old road, to keep the franchise open. No, the place wasn't anything to be ashamed of—even before Martha. It had been but the most unlikely of chances that she had never entered a steel mill before this night. And unlikely, too, that Martin had said so little to her of his own regret at his not having insisted on her coming to work for him, when she had first left school, instead of going into business for herself.

The ladle was huge. It was a great cone, or, rather, a cone upside down, as it was flaring at the top and small at the base. The fresh metal poured down into it, a thin white stream of incandescence. Martin could feel the searing heat, as far off as they were standing. The dough springing out into the vats—that was nothing to it! Dough was hardly warm, the life within it heavy and viscid. Steel never stirred so faintly unless it had been subjected to processes which would have destroyed dough altogether. White at first, then yellow, then the bright hue of gold. Steel was king. But it wasn't for Martin to say that.

"It's another sort of baking altogether," Martha said.

She wasn't inured to steel mills. Martin led her towards a long row of furnaces which went off in straight perspective, as a row of stones might, to mark a road. But they were larger than any stones.

"We'll wait here," said Martin. "They're getting ready to tap Number 11 now."

"It's not so different from baking—"

Let her think that, if it pleased her to think it.

"And yet, I don't know—perhaps it is. I know so little about steel."

"You could learn."

"Not here," said Martha. "I'm afraid there wouldn't be any place for a woman here." She spoke as if it were a pity. Martin looked at her.

"A woman's place—" she spoke again.

"MAMMOTH?" asked Martin.

"I suppose so—"

"Oh, there'll be plenty of women at MAMMOTH," Martin assured her. "And you'll be like a queen among them. You'll have a fine office and a beautiful mahogany desk and fresh roses in a vase every morning. Except on state occasions, of course, and in the presence of photographers, you won't be expected to wander round the plants the way you do now."

"You don't always do what you're expected to do," Martha answered. She was looking at a narrow iron platform where the men responsible for the tapping were gathered. One of them waved an arm. "They don't seem exactly human—"

Martin explained that the heavy canvas clothing and the protruding goggles were a necessary protection. And then—"Just a moment now. The steel is almost ready."

In that tenseness of waiting Martha asked an odd question: "How's Miss Bellows?"

"Not so good. She's not as young as she once was. If I didn't need her so damned much, I'd retire her on a pension."

But I haven't anyone to do her work. More than her work, it would be—"

"There must be men—"

"No—a man who knew that much either couldn't be trusted, or he wouldn't want the job. It's a damned good job—for a woman."

Martha didn't seem to be listening. "I wonder what the delay is? Do you think they'd let me stand up on that platform?"

"It would be all right, if you're careful, and stay back. Pull your coat collar up about your face—" Martin produced the goggles he always carried with him— "Put those on—and take my arm—"

Together, they walked up the narrow iron stairs.

"I suppose," said Martha, as casually as if she were negotiating a few steps in a garden path, "a woman would have to learn quite a lot before she'd be really competent to handle Miss Bellows' job, but, once she got the hang of it, she could go on from there."

Martin was stopped from answering her by the furnace door, flung wide. Flowery sparks flew all about them as the metal catapulted into the waiting ladle. Martin shielded his eyes with his gloved hand, not alone against the heat but as protection from the ineffable brilliance which—to look at then—would have been like looking into the sun. Martha didn't mind it, half masked as she was. She stared straight into the fierce stream, steadying herself with one strong hand on the railing and the other gripping Martin's elbow. And she talked. Her talk had the constant, unremitting cadence of a priest's incantation before the altar. It was as if she invoked the molten steel there, and not Martin at all, though it must have been he whom she addressed, rather than the insentient metal:

"After all, I know something about running a plant. I ought to. I've been in the business for fifteen years. And

what I don't know, I can learn. I've always been able to learn. There's nothing wrong with my head. I'm afraid I'd be no good as a regular secretary—typing, shorthand and all that—I must have forgotten what I ever knew about it—though there are plenty of good secretaries to be had. That wasn't what you meant when you said you hadn't anyone. But I couldn't come to you if I don't sell to MAMMOTH—I couldn't quit—and MAMMOTH may not want to buy—not without me. That's something I'll have to find out. If I sell, I'll be rich, and what good's being rich if you can't do as you please? I shouldn't want a salary—just a small interest in the business—just to make me feel I had an interest. You could go on paying Miss Bellows anything you pay her now. She could travel around the whole world—she told me once she wanted to—any place she wanted to go—Tahiti or Timbuctoo—she could have quite a time for herself—or she could raise roses the same way Mr. Drake does. I don't want to raise roses—not ever—or have them in a vase on my desk. It's a funny way to ask for a job, and I'm not sure I'm free to ask for one. But maybe I will be." She stopped talking.

Martin might have guessed that steel wouldn't fail him. It never had—not when he'd put his trust in it wholly.

Martha took her hand from his arm and went down the steps. Back through the whole length of the mill she went, never once turning to see that Martin followed her. She walked fast, swinging her goggles. Martin, who must stop to speak to this man and that man, came to be several lengths behind her. She got outside well ahead, and, in that moment when she was cut off from his sight, he wondered if the whole scene had been a mirage of seeing and hearing. But there she was, waiting by the car. They got in together.

"It's all right with me," Martin said. "It's what I've always wanted."

"Yes, I know," Martha answered him. "You're the only

person who's ever wanted what I really had to give."

"What you really had to give, Martha?"

"Myself—what I really am. Isn't that all anyone has to give?"

"Didn't Silverton and Julian—in their separate ways—want that of you?"

"I was useful to them. And—in their separate ways—they outgrew my usefulness—first, Julian, and now, Silverton. He wants a bigger job than any CRUMPLE CAKES can hold for him."

"MAMMOTH might be able to interest him," said Martin.

"Yes, I'd thought of that. They might take him instead of me—particularly as things are now."

Martin knew it was captious of him not to think these things perfect. But they never could be perfect, he kept telling himself, all the way back in the car, back to the entrance of Martha's hotel. As it was, he was luckier than he'd ever dared to hope he would be.

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"That's not a bad bargain, Martha!"

"Not bad at all—"

"No—not bad."

The three of them, Tom Fleetwood, Morris Silverton and Martin himself, one after the other, all with varying inflections of assurance, approved the sale of CRUMPLE CAKES to the MAMMOTH BAKING CORPORATION. The official approval of the two last named was already a matter of record. This was unofficial—wholly personal. They all waited for Martha to speak, possibly to voice in some suitable manner her appreciation of their approval. Martin's waiting alone was tinged with any doubt. Fleetwood and Silverton were, you could tell, surprised at her continued silence.

It was Morris Silverton who relieved it: "I don't often make out a check for two million dollars."

He put his pen back into his pocket. It was a very beautiful pen, covered with an intricacy of silver scroll-work. The check of which he had spoken was dry now, and he handed it to Martin.

"There's my receipt in full," said Martin, exchanging papers with him. No one—not even Martin in his palmiest days—often had cause to give a receipt for such an amount.

When Martha finally said something, it was to Martin: "At last you get your money back."

Martin sank heavily into the depths of his chair. The best chair in Fleetwood's office was not as comfortable as the one in Martha's office. That chair really belonged to him. He wondered if it were too late to claim it, or if the MAMMOTH had already taken over the entire equipment.

"Tom never thought I would," Martin said. "That's the reason he dragged himself down town to-day—to see me get it."

The lawyer bridled. "I don't know what you mean by that! I haven't missed a legitimate business day since I can remember."

"How about the illegitimate ones?" There was something in this adjective which was a little shocking in these sainted precincts.

Fleetwood turned to Silverton, changing the subject. He and Silverton got along very well together, in spite of racial differences. "I understand that the MAMMOTH people have made you an offer."

"Yes, I've been very fortunate that way. I've had a number of offers."

"Fortunate nothing!" This from Martin—"They were damned lucky to get you." He knew perfectly well that Silverton didn't want to tell Fleetwood the thing was settled—but why shouldn't he? "What with Ellingsford's dying so

unexpectedly, and no one within their organization who was free, and of sufficient calibre to fill his shoes—”

“Very sad,” said Fleetwood. “A most able man. As soon as I heard of his death I wondered who could replace him.”

“So did we all,” said Martin.

“You didn’t let any grass grow,” Fleetwood addressed Silverton.

‘The Jew hastened to outline his own position—a little too carefully, Martin thought. He wasn’t always sure with Morris Silverton that he was speaking the exact truth. “I wouldn’t put it quite like that, Mr. Fleetwood. You see, as long as Martha was going in with them—and that was the initial understanding—my hands were tied. They wouldn’t have cared to have taken us both. Therefore it would have been impossible for me to have dealt with them on any basis, in regard to my own fitness for the opening created by Mr. Ellingsford’s passing, until I received Martha’s assurance that she herself did not wish to accept their exceedingly advantageous offer.”

“It was an entirely different position, wasn’t it?” Fleetwood asked. “I mean the one offered Martha and that to be obtained by you.”

“Oh, quite, but even so . . . However, as soon as she told me of her decision—well—I will admit, just between ourselves, that I held up certain negotiations elsewhere.”

“In other words,” said Martin, “and shorter words, that was a horse of another color.”

“Quite so,” said Silverton. No words could be shorter than the two he used.

“Absolutely,” said Martha.

Martha spoke dryly, and, with her, dryness was not habitual. Martin wondered then, and he’d wondered since, if Silverton’s scrupulousness would have stayed his hands as completely as he would have had them all suppose. Undoubtedly, he hadn’t himself broached the matter of his

fitness for the coveted opening in any direct way. Certainly not before he was ethically free to do so. He hadn't had the chance. Martha had moved faster than he had. She had understood the possibilities of the situation the moment Martin had showed her that item in the evening paper, and had made all haste to put herself out of competition. She knew Silverton better than they did. It would have been a characteristic thing for Martha to have done. She had proved so often that she believed in getting out while the getting was good. She did it, as it were, instinctively. It was characteristic, too, of both Martha and Martin that, for all his wondering, they never discussed the point. Those few words in Fleetwood's office closed the matter forever.

"Of course Martha gets two million dollars' worth of MAMMOTH stock," Silverton said.

"At the market?" Fleetwood asked.

"Of course—at the market."

"That's a pretty neat buy—at the present market."

"I am aware of that."

Martin couldn't blame his son-in-law too much. The young man didn't have two million dollars' worth of MAMMOTH stock at bargain rates, and he had an extravagant wife to support—Sarah was extravagant no one knew better than Martin did—and his own way to make in the world.

"When do you assume your new duties?" Fleetwood asked him.

"In another week or so. That is to say, as soon as the liquidation proceedings here are completed. When it has no property, CRUMPLE CAKES will cease functioning as a corporation, and then I shall be free."

It seemed to Martin that they were all becoming freer by the minute. Pretense after pretense had been dropped. What would they do with so much freedom? It wasn't very long before he found out.

"My wife wants me to take a vacation," Silverton went

on, "but I don't think this is any moment for a vacation—at least it would hardly seem so."

Fleetwood wiped his glasses. "Very wise—very wise. Women don't understand such matters, except women like Martha here." He turned to her—"And when do you start at the Lyndendaal offices?"

"In another week or so. Miss Bellows is leaving on the fifteenth, and before she does, she's got to show me a great many things."

"Speaking of vacations," said Martin, "I've urged Martha to take one, but she won't listen to me."

"If I went away now," Martha explained, "with Miss Bellows definitely sold on the idea of retiring, you might find a secretary you liked better."

"I should doubt that," said Fleetwood. "I should doubt it very much."

The words were flattering enough. Something in the tone was not. Possibly, Martin thought, the lawyer considered a position, which could even be identified as secretarial, beneath the dignity of a woman who owned two million dollars' worth of a sound stock, which—reckoned at par—paid four and a half percent. And Martha was getting it considerably below par. To Tom Fleetwood, the money people had blazed like a halo around their heads. Well, being a secretary was a comparatively harmless eccentricity for a rich woman . . . But Fleetwood, in the next breath, showed that he didn't think it harmless:

"Far be it from me," he said, "to criticize your decisions, Martha. But I am afraid others may not be so forbearing. You must be prepared for a certain amount of comment."

"What kind of comment?" Martha asked.

"Adverse. After all, your financial position is such that you don't have to work—except possibly to manage your own affairs."

"You mean, I'm keeping the job from someone else—

someone who needs it more than I do? It isn't a job that's so easy to fill, you know."

"I didn't mean quite that, but we'll let it pass."

"Just what did you mean?"

"Nothing—nothing to which I should have given voice. It is only my position as your legal adviser, and standing, also—if I may say so—in *loco parentis*, now that your mother has returned to her native land, that makes me feel I should be doing less than my duty if I did not at least intimate to you in what manner your new vocation might be regarded."

Martin had it in his mind to shut Fleetwood off. In fact, he should have done so, long before. But something stayed his tongue. Martha was getting mad. And to expose the man to that anger would be, in the long run, a more effective weapon than any he himself possessed. And there was another thing that held him silent. He had this same odd sense, which he'd had so many times, that chance was busy in his favor, and to let it ride. He didn't know just how, but let it ride—that was the thing.

Besides, Fleetwood was wading out further into the treacherous sea with every step he took—every word which was a step. Let him get beyond his depths and then see what happened.

"I feel sure," he said, "that no one who knew you could misjudge or misinterpret anything—anything at all."

Martha looked at Tom Fleetwood and smiled. It was the smile, or rather the anticipatory stare, of a cat watching a canary who is perched at the open door of the cage.

"Oh—! Then you're not talking about what people will say? It's too bad."

"What's too bad?" It was Silverton's question. He was an interested spectator, merely, but someone had to ask.

Martha's glance never wavered from Fleetwood: "Too bad, what a terrible reputation Cousin Martin has. I suppose, really, that no woman can work for him and be safe.

Poor Miss Bellows, she lived for twenty-five years in imminent danger of a fate worse than death—though I don't think it ever quite overtook her. Poor Cousin Martin—and all the money he's lent me—that must have given people pause—people who knew about it, like yourself, Mr. Fleetwood. And now I've paid it back, and still he inveigles me! I go to work for him—when I don't have to. I haven't even the excuse of needing food and shelter. But I don't need any excuse, Mr. Fleetwood—I'm way past that stage—

"Really, Martha, really—"

"I'd be awfully careful of that first name, if I were you—you used to make rather a point of calling me Mrs. Lyncendaal—which I still am. Convenient, isn't it? I doubt, otherwise, that a respectable hotel like the Winderman would have taken me in."

"You're placing a wholly false interpretation on—"

"No, they wouldn't have taken me in, I'm sure—even temporarily. Because, of course, it is temporarily. Sarah tells me that Cousin Martin has had her old rooms done over in accordance with what he hopes is my taste. I'm moving into them just as soon as he gets up courage to ask me, because I don't go where I'm not invited."

"You're invited now," said Martin.

He laughed. He hadn't laughed so, not in years, not since he'd been a boy. For a moment he wondered at the surprise in the faces of Silverton and Martha, and even of Fleetwood himself, who was rather beyond surprise at anything whatever. And then it occurred to Martin that none of these people had ever heard him laugh so. It would have taken Axel Christiansen, Martha's father, to have remembered.

Martin laughed a little long and a little hard. Laughter such as that was all right for a boy, but for him, it imposed—though he didn't know it at the time—too great a strain upon his old and inelastic arteries, forcing the blood through

his body at too great a speed, as running might do, or any unaccustomed feat. His amusement expressed, he felt weak and breathless, and the walls of Fleetwood's offices seemed suddenly close. Someone—it must have been Morris Silverton—asked him if he wasn't feeling well.

There were so many ways of feeling well—or ill. Silverton and Martha went with him down to his car, and Martha drove home with him, and Eric made him lie down. A brief rest was all he needed. He couldn't rest for long. He had things to do. So much to do, always. More now than ever. He was acutely conscious of the pressure of them, and of the labors which awaited him. That fabulous check in his pocket was like the olive leaf which the dove brought back to Noah, a sign that the flooding waters had abated from the earth. And Martha's equally fabulous statement of her intention to occupy his great empty house—what was that like? He had for it no term of comparison. No, matters such as these were not matters to be isolated and put aside and dealt with at your own convenience—put aside because you were ill. In fact, this first indisposition of Martin's, this brief required rest, would not have been worth noting at all, except that it *was* the first. That was back in the very early spring of 1933—over six years ago—nearly seven. A brief interval. These intervals had gradually spread, and joined to form an unbroken pattern.

The day when Martha brought him home from Fleetwood's office, and came to live with him in his big house, was the beginning of Martin's last period. Though at the time he applied to it no such term. There was too much unfinished business—some with threads leading back into the past, and some the threads from which must always wind themselves in and out among the present and the future. There was unfinished business, whatever you did or didn't do, and in whatever direction you turned your face.

Martha came to live with him. It wasn't quite as he had thought it would be. She insisted—and had quite a quarrel with him before the matter was settled—on shouldering half the expenses of his establishment. It would have cost her as much, or more, in a hotel, she said. He would have plenty of uses for his new found capital—all of it that he could spare. And she bought into MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED. Not too heavily—not in any way to shift control.

She raked up fifty thousand dollars somewhere. Possibly she had found it beneath the feather mattress which her mother had brought with her from Denmark, and had now taken back there. It had nothing to do, Martin knew, with her *four-and-a-half-percents*. She was allowed to purchase a block of LYNDENDAAL stock.

"My mink coat," she told Martin, when the stock was transferred to her account.

"You're getting mink confused with sable," Martin replied.

"Oh, am I? I'm afraid it's something I don't know much about. How did you?"

"I'm thoroughly house-broken," Martin said.

Martha was an extraordinary young woman. His personal bias in her direction had perhaps prevented his full appreciation of her qualities. She came into the LYNDENDAAL offices and sat down at Miss Bellows' desk, and her effect on the place was the effect of a blood transfusion or a saline injection or any other revivifying process. Whatever she had owed to Martin in the past, he now owed her everything. She functioned with a peculiar rough efficiency, wholly alien to Miss Bellows' card-index methods. Though she admired these, she said, and had preserved all the best features of Miss Bellows' arrangements. There must have been a very limited number of them, Martin was surprised to discover.

And meanwhile, there were a group of men in Washington—not the president, but the men he had called in desperation to his side—who were vocal and full of zeal about the nefarious practices of commerce. Martin's fellow industrialists had a great deal to say, in rebuttal, on the evils of Government Control. That still was something new—a straw man to be set up and demolished—but a nice fresh new one. Martin made himself pretty unpopular by recalling to the minds of his colleagues certain regulations which had antedated the Roosevelt regime. They were, for the most part, college luminaries, these men whom the president had brought forth from various, now gaping, seats of learning. They at least had ideas, though they talked too much and some of their ideas weren't practical.

Franklin Roosevelt, ever a practical man in spite of his enthusiasms, began to find that out. This made them mad and they retired, somewhat disgruntled, and wrote books. Martin was never much of a reader. Roosevelt was a great experimenter, and he was rather free with government funds. Some of Martin's associates thought Roosevelt was rather free in meeting the demands of labor. He was considered a traitor to his own class—the capitalistic class. But this class had been pretty well knocked about before Roosevelt ever came into power. A few blows more or less—Martin didn't think it made much difference. His own business began to pick up a little. As the years went on, all business picked up. There was no doubt of that. Though of course many people said that it did this in spite of Roosevelt, not because of him. And these same people seemed to be terribly afraid of what might happen. But they, and others like them, had been afraid before. They'd been afraid of the old Theodore and of Woodrow Wilson and of any man who wasn't a Republican like themselves.

The old Theodore—Theodore Roosevelt—had been a Republican, in a sense, but he had formed a third party. As

for this present man, he was a Democrat, and there were even Democrats who didn't trust him! The atmosphere of distrust, and the fear it engendered, was the most dangerous feature of the present administration. People felt they didn't know what was going to happen next. Had they ever?

Martin had often been impressed by the terrific energies used up in talk. But the talk in the past had been nothing to this. It was aided now by a new machine which could send the speech of one man to every bedside and every dinner table and every human habitation worthy of the name. Martin had read somewhere that it was the invention of printing which had most changed the political set-up. The general use of the radio changed it again. People who had little time or habit for a careful study of the newspapers could turn a dial, and go on about their business, while they listened to news and opinions, as it were, in the making—hot off the griddle. No turning of pages, no straining of eyes—just listening. You could hear a great deal of news for the expenditure of one cent's worth of electric current—as the biggest of the electric utility companies was not slow in pointing out. Martin himself had never cared much for the radio. But that was purely a personal reaction. He didn't minimize its importance. It might have been that he was born a little early to himself be greatly affected by it. And yet this world in which he still was living—actively living—was affected by it.

Some men, no younger than he, were more malleable to general progress. He was progressive enough in business, in his mills, but otherwise not. Depression had struck at the wrong time—his own private depression. It had arrested the growth in him. The arrest hadn't shown. Not as such things might show. It had been a stultification deep within himself. His mere weight had carried him—not his weight in pounds, but his weight in power. Anything he accomplished after that was the accomplishment of a dam which holds

back a stream. He was happy enough. He was even content. He felt a great kinship with the old dog, Gustavus Adolphus. He envied him a little, too. Nothing was expected of Matthew's dog any more, nothing but obedience and general good behavior according to the standards set for his kind. But Martin was still the big industrialist, of superhuman energies. A steel mill might be no place for a woman, but it was a place for him. And he was content in that place, though at times he was so tired that it was a hard thing to save himself from falling against surfaces offering no safe haven for human flesh. But he did save himself—every time. What for, was another matter.

His friends and his kin over here were a short-lived lot. Tom Fleetwood died, though he could hardly be included among Martin's friends after that scene in Fleetwood's office. But Martin felt sorry that he died. Tom was such a slender little fellow, brittle as an etched champagne glass, the sort who could be expected to live forever! Of Martin's own generation, who were in any way close to him, only Rosch remained. Rosch and Emily, Tom Fleetwood's widow. He never saw much of Emily, or of Gordon Calverton, Emily's brother, who also lived on. But Gordon was a great deal younger than Martin was. In Denmark it was different. He had plenty of kin in Denmark of his own generation. His brothers, Karl and Peter, were both alive. And Anna was alive, too, running her farm, or at least seeing that it ran. Rosch was the only one here, really. Himself and Charlie Rosch, the two old men.

What a throng of folk it was, and had become, who were dead! His mother, who had died of grief because of him, and his father, the soldier, who had lost a leg in the last of Denmark's wars and was drowned while fishing. And Carnegie and Morgan and the Fleetwoods, senior and junior, and the senior Gordon Calverton, Frances's father, who had died upstairs of some sort of fit produced by anger, while

Martin and Cousin Henry were eating Christmas ducks and drinking corn liquor. And King Frederick, who had given Martin the Knight's Cross of the *Dannebrog* Order, and Jonathan Lake and Mrs. Calverton and her daughter, Frances, who was Martin's wife. And Axel Christiansen himself, who would remember how Martin could laugh. People began to die when you yourself were quite young—old people, and others not so old, here and there, for this cause or that cause. But, as the years gathered, the parade of the dying was of a closer formation. People who had no more cause to die than you had yourself dropped off unexpectedly, and their places were taken by others. This man, Ellingsford, for instance. Anyone might drive along a wet road and skid, and have a heavy car turn over and be pinned beneath it, and die sooner or later of injuries received. Martin himself might do that. But he didn't.

Threading among the mass of talk, there was much discussion of pension systems for the old. A doctor named Townsend had a scheme all worked out. Everyone over a certain age should receive two hundred dollars a month, which he must spend within the month. But this wouldn't apply to Martin, who already had an income far in excess of this sum. It presupposed a life of modest ease, free from care, free from labor. Economists didn't like this particular panacea. Economists had such a wide choice of things not to like. A curious anomaly was presented for their sight. It was of the very heart of democracy to favor the effort of the individual. From this effort came the rich and the successful, and from the rich and the successful came capitalism and all its evils.

Roosevelt, a democratic president in every sense, sought to curb these evils, if evils they were. Roosevelt, a democratic president, seemed to think that democracy was a weak thing—as perhaps it was—and had to be helped. Everyone had his own idea about democracy. For Martin, it had been

opportunity—given him—and he had taken it at its tide, which had led to fortune. The tide had ebbed. And that was democracy, too. Let people alone. Even the financial men must be free for their gains and their losses. Yet some people said that democracy was for the protection of property. The great mass of people had no property, but they had votes. Roosevelt coined a phrase—the forgotten man. The forgotten man must be remembered. Roosevelt was against autocracy, yet he took to himself powers rarely vested in a president—so much so, in fact, that he was accused of being a dictator, or wanting to be. But Roosevelt was no dictator. He had a largeness of spirit, and, if his detail sometimes failed him, he yet conceived the world nobly. The dictators were men of an altogether different stripe—men of small and predatory minds and ruthless egos. They possessed no quality of nobility whatever—not one drop of it in any one of them. Why—the kind of men they were wasn't even in doubt any more—wasn't even a subject for argument.

During those years, people kept asking Martin what he thought. Where did he stand on this question and that question? Not that it really mattered, where he stood, but he still had a name, and—if his opinion coincided with his questioner's—it would be quoted as important. If not, the less said about it, the better. What Martin thought . . . A few years ago, when people had asked him, he had had so little time and so little energy to answer.

Now, he had all the time there was, and his energy was bright with rest, but what he thought mattered even less than it had then. So many of his ideas had outgrown their usefulness. People had new things to worry them, things which didn't concern Martin—or Roosevelt either, except in so far as Roosevelt was an ally. They were filled with new uncertainties and new fears. Martin was uncertain, too, but he wasn't afraid. He was old and he was ill. That was

as he was now. Then, a few years ago, he was only in the earlier processes of becoming as he was.

Such close years, they were. Looking back, Martin couldn't see them whole, even yet. The perspective wasn't long enough. There was hardly any perspective whatever, they were so close.

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Speaking of unfinished business, and the threads from it which must wind themselves in and out among present and future, there had been, during those years, the problems increasingly brought forth by the young Matthew. Matthew gave a strange and alien life to that great pile of steel and stone which Martin had built for himself as a house. Not that the boy was in the house much. He was away at school most of the time, but he left his mark, wherever he was, much as the progeny of Gustavus Adolphus left their paw marks on the satin upholstery of the drawing-room. The old dog was too well behaved for that, but would lie quiet at Martin's feet. No, nothing was expected of Gustavus Adolphus. So much was expected of everyone else—including Matthew.

In December of 1934, Matthew was sixteen. His racial mixture made for a maturity beyond his age. He was tall and strong—not gangling—and he had a fine deep man's voice and a determined way about him. At school he led his classes, got into no trouble and was a credit to everyone. In fact, Martin received for the boy a little too much credit, everyone thinking, and taking it for granted, that Matthew was his son. Something ought to be done about that—something drastic—but another year went by and nothing was. Sooner or later, Matthew would have to be told. Martin kept putting it off, being inclined to let well enough alone.

People seemed to be extraordinarily broadminded about this entirely presentable member of the Lyndendaal household. After all, he had been legally adopted and given a legal name. It was Sarah who finally brought matters to a head. Sarah was one of the few people who knew the true relationship.

"You'll have to tell him," she said to Martin, "you should have told him long ago. I don't know whom you're trying to protect—not yourself certainly—and not Julian or his delightful wife! And it isn't only Matthew whom you'll have to tell. People simply don't know what I am thinking about!" She emphasized the *I*.

"What you're thinking about, Sarah? And where does that come into it?"

"You wouldn't know. You wouldn't have heard the talk."

"What kind of talk?" Martin seemed to be surrounded by talk.

"Well, one of those very dear friends of mine told me, just yesterday, that I must be quite insane, letting my daughter be on such close terms with a boy who everybody knows is her natural uncle—"

"I didn't know there was anything between Sylvia and Matthew."

"There isn't—not in your sense of the word. But I don't suppose you knew, either, that he's crazy about her—and she about him."

"I knew they went to the same parties when Matthew is home on his holidays—Sylvia's been very kind, getting him into the sort of inner circle of which she is such a shining member."

"It's called, for your information, the sub-debutante set."

"Whatever it's called . . . Is Sylvia seriously in love with him?"

"Not seriously. She's a child. They both are. But he told her he couldn't see her any more, and I fancy he made it

pretty clear, how he felt about her. She doesn't understand. He's become, in her eyes, a mysterious romantic figure instead of just an old playmate. I can understand that—there's a certain fire about him. It's his foreign blood, I suppose."

"And Sylvia, half Italian as she is—"

"Exactly. It's a combination."

"He's always thought that I was his father."

"Yes, and you've let him think it. You've been rather pleased that he should think it."

That was hardly fair of Sarah. It wasn't a question of Martin's being pleased.

"I thought it best," said Martin, "that he shouldn't think anything. The fact that he does misunderstand the situation is unfortunate, and that he's taken a boyish fancy for a girl whom he regards as his niece—"

"It makes it perfect, all around, doesn't it?"

"It seems I'll not only have to tell Matthew, but the world at large!"

"Not necessarily. Merely let it be known, here and there, that Matthew is not your son. Your word would be sufficient."

"The resemblance?"

"You could say that was merely coincidental—what attracted you towards him in the first place. Martha thinks you ought to say something—in case you're interested. Though she likes Matthew, and she knows that some day she and he will own the whole steelworks between them."

"Martha has said nothing to me about it. Nothing whatever."

"Why should she? I probably wouldn't myself if it wasn't for Sylvia. Not that I want this affair to go on, after the two of them are grown up. I don't believe in cousins marrying. But at least any boy-and-girl romance is perfectly legitimate."

"As Matthew isn't?" Martin asked.

"I suppose," said Sarah, "that it never occurred to you that

now that Julian and Zari are married, Matthew is perfectly legitimate."

Martin wasn't sure of that, but it was something to think about. If Matthew's parents ever wanted to make trouble, he supposed they could, even though Zari had once signed papers, signing away all right in him.

Matthew had been at camp all summer. He was returning to school the following week. He was as tanned as shoe leather, and as handsome a boy as you'd care to see. There was a good deal of him to see when Martin came into the room—Julian's old room—where he was lying, full length, on the bed, clad in running trunks and nothing else, as the weather was still warm. Martin had been careless in not noticing before how unhappy Matthew was. He lay there, staring at the ceiling, as though to watch the progress of a fly across it, and thinking dark thoughts.

"I want to talk to you, Matthew."

In his absorption in gloom, he hadn't heard Martin's knock or heard him come in. He sat up suddenly, with one strong motion of his body. "Why—yes, Uncle Martin, of course. Won't you sit down?" He rose to his full six feet of height—he was still growing—and removed some clothes from a convenient chair.

Martin sat. "You always call me Uncle Martin, don't you?"

"Yes—"

"That's what I want to talk to you about. I'm not really your uncle."

The boy turned his head away. "I know who you are."

"You think I'm your father?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not."

"Don't kid me!"

"I wouldn't—"

"If you're not my father, who is?"

On the wall was a framed photograph of Julian as a young man. It had stood on Frances's little desk in her writing room, and when she died Martin had moved it here. He pointed to it. "There—"

"Uncle Julian?"

"Yes. My son Julian is your father. I'm your grandfather."

"You mean—Aunt Martha is . . . But that's impossible! She's never liked me very much—I know that—but she wouldn't have left me in that dump I just can hardly remember—"

"No, she wouldn't have done that. It happened before she even knew your father at all."

"Well," said Matthew, suddenly extraordinarily cheerful, "I suppose the next question is, who my mother is."

"Yes, I should say that was the next question."

"Do you know? I suppose you must." A relief had been growing in Matthew's face. Tight muscles seemed to relax there. It was a relief not entirely shared by Martin. But, after all, for Martin nothing was solved. Martin had not been in love with a girl whom he had thought to be his niece, and now knew was not.

"Yes, I know," he told his grandson. "Your mother is Mme. Zari, your father's present wife. He got mixed up with her when he was working in Mr. Rosch's mills at the time of the war."

"And then he married Aunt Martha, after that?"

"Yes. And he married your mother, after that."

"Better late than never," said Matthew unexpectedly. "They never tried to get me away from you, did they—I mean, since they were married?"

"No."

"Could they?"

"I suppose they could make trouble, if they wanted to. But the onus, as a lawyer would say, would lie on Zari to prove that she was a fit guardian for you. She certainly wasn't when

you were a baby, and from what I've heard of her since, I should doubt her fitness now."

Matthew brought up the same point that Sarah had. "Well, anyway, there's one thing straightened out. Now that they're married, I'm not a bastard."

"Was that worrying you?"

"At times." Matthew went over to the window and looked out. He must have been quite visible to anyone in the yard. There wasn't anyone out there except the dog. "Gus is getting old," he said. "It's what I told Sylvia."

"That Gus is getting old?"

"No—about being a bastard. I had to tell her something!"

Martin felt that there might have been more suitable topics. "You're quite taken with Sylvia, aren't you?"

"That's one way of putting it."

"Sylvia may not be your niece, but she is your cousin—your own cousin."

Matthew looked at him. "There's no law against that, is there?"

"I believe not—in New York State. But it isn't the best thing."

Matthew asked a question, the reason for which wasn't immediately clear: "What did you do when you were my age?"

"I was a porter in a hotel. I was suspected of assaulting one of the women guests. I lost my job. I got one in the stokehole of a freighter out from Copenhagen—"

"I know all about the stokehole. Was what you were suspected of true?"

"Why, yes, in a manner of speaking."

Matthew adopted a very high tone: "If you'd cared enough for a nice girl, you probably wouldn't have done it."

"Probably not." Martin thought of something—"Is it your intention to wait for Sylvia—and for yourself—without any—"

"Any steps aside? How do I know what I'll do—or what Sylvia will do, either?"

"You would extend to her the same freedom you would take for yourself?"

"Why not? That would be only fair, wouldn't it?"

Martin took refuge in the only thing he could think of: "Sylvia's mother might have something to say!"

"She likely would. Aunt Sarah's swell. I used to be crazy about her when I was a kid."

"Your aunt—"

"I didn't know she was my aunt."

"No, you thought she was your half-sister."

"I didn't think. But of course she's not so young any more. Forty, anyway—"

"She's nearly forty-three," said Martin, "but she doesn't look it."

"No," said Matthew, "I don't think she does. But functionally, she is. You never studied physiology, did you, Uncle Martin—I mean, Grandfather?"

"Very briefly." The "Grandfather" had pleased Martin, coming out in the open, like that.

"You should. It's pretty interesting. That's a rather tough school you picked for me. They believe in cramming about as much formal knowledge into you as you can hold—then you get that out of the way, and go on to think for yourself."

"So I see."

Matthew had taken the news of his parentage wholly from his own, and his immediate, point of view. He could now be called legitimate, and Sylvia Mattiabelli was his cousin. His grandfather was perfectly willing to let it go at that, and as for Matthew's being encouraged to think for himself, there was no objection to that either. But his thinking could at least be guided a little:

"You've got lots of time, Matthew. Aunts—half-sisters—cousins, even. . . . When you're through with college and

technical schools, and well established in the mills, in about ten years from now you may meet some girl who is no kin of yours at all, and—”

“Ten years!” Matthew cut him off. “Nineteen-forty-five—that’s a hell of a long time—” He picked up a robe and slung it half-way over his shoulder. “Plenty may happen before that! I think I’ll phone Sylvia. I might go over there this evening.”

“Why don’t you?”

Martin had no wish to stop him from going there, or anywhere else—not even out into the hall to the third floor telephone—undressed as he was. Frances would have fainted at anyone’s wandering about her house in such fashion, but times had changed. Martin was relieved that the thing was over. The talk he’d had with Matthew had passed off as well as he could have hoped. Better. Because he couldn’t possibly have foreseen Matthew’s total lack of interest in his father and mother. He had always liked Julian so much, and he had talked about Zari. But to-day he had not even inquired where they were. Perhaps he had happened to know. Perhaps he didn’t.

Martin knew. They were at the safe distance of Paris. Zari was singing in a café there which Julian had bought for her. It was rather notorious. So was Zari. So was Julian. That is to say, Julian was notorious not for any acts he himself committed, but for his apparent complacency in the face of acts committed by others. *Monsieur Zari*, he was called. That was satisfactory to Martin. *M. Zari* presented to the patrons of his wife’s establishment exactly the spectacle such people expected to behold there . . . A rather shabby, grossly heavy man seated at an obscure table, always with a glass in front of him, and his wife’s pet monkey usually perched upon his shoulder quite lovingly. That was life. That was Paris. That was the kind of spectacle your home town couldn’t produce—or didn’t. Fortunately it was one

which Martin himself had been spared, but he'd heard about it often enough from kind friends, such as himself and Sarah seemed to possess. It wasn't a very agreeable vision to brood upon, accepting the blame for it as he did. Perhaps he accepted too much blame, he couldn't always keep himself from wondering.

People had varying abilities, and they must fare—within limits—according to these. His son could offer no infringement to the general law. The measure of success was a difficult measure to gage. It wasn't money, it wasn't fame, it wasn't happiness. Was it usefulness? Usefulness to whom and to what? Was it a use of your talents? It might be—if you had them. It was knowing what you wanted, and being willing to make the sacrifices necessary to get it. And, even then, you might slip. You might want something too unworthy to be measured as success. As Julian evidently had done.

Martin had no quarrel with Julian—no real quarrel. Though he might not have been as he now was—not quite as he now was—had it not been for Julian. He had been so tired that day Julian had come back—so tired that some clerk in the mills had been deputed to come home with him.

And it was so important that he shouldn't be tired, on that day of all days. There was so much to be done, and he had made all arrangements to do it. There was a very important meeting scheduled, and he was taking the night train to Pittsburgh in order to be there. The meeting had to do with labor. And Martin's well-proved attitude towards labor was one from which he wasn't going to budge a single inch. The Steel Workers' Organizing Committee had started to function. Most steel men thought it a dangerous union, which perhaps it was, from their angle. So they were meeting quietly and casually to discuss means to break it up—just among themselves. Charlie Rosch would be present, and bigger men than Rosch was. Martin was taking advantage of

his invitation to come, in order to talk a little sense into them. There'd be a good deal of a row, he suspected, before he got through, but he was rather looking forward to it.

During the last quarter-century organized labor had become powerful—a force to be met and reckoned with, and not by the methods employed at Homestead in 1893. It was no longer a wild and half-starved stray. Martin had always been willing to compromise with labor, somewhat before the general compromises which had, bit by bit, become necessary. That was radicalism, if you like, but it was also common sense—human sense. Because of this, some there were who applied to him the dread word, Red. He, like Roosevelt, was a traitor to his class—in his case, the class which he had attained. He received a good deal of criticism from his competitors because of his liberal attitude. It didn't always hang together. He was criticized on the ground that his position was wholly dictated by self-interest, and also on the seemingly opposite ground that he was a dangerous backslider, at any moment prepared to turn the entire steel industry over to the revolutionaries. Neither view regarding him was true, but the first was truer than the second. Strikes never amounted to very much in the Lyndendaal plants.

At a time when steel offered an almost solid front against independent unionism, Martin had always been ready to bargain—he had always been “available.” Spying and intimidation had never been his methods. No man was ever discharged for joining a union, and the wage scale was usually above the union rates. This known policy of Martin's made the field infertile for mere trouble makers and had got him through a good many periods agreeably labeled as periods of unrest. Naturally, Martin wasn't in entire sympathy with labor. He felt that it was, in certain instances, wrong, and, in others, over-exploited by its leaders. Within itself, there were disruptions which might have been avoided. People talked of Labor, with a big L, as though it were a solid mass—

united we stand, divided we fall. And yet the very division might breed strength. Surely democracy was of the very essence of division!

Sometimes Martin felt that he himself hadn't had enough to do with democracy. Why, if it hadn't been for the early success which had bound him to his own work, he might have gone in for politics, or he might have become a man like John Lewis, whom he knew and admired and had had much traffic with. John Lewis and his C.I.O., and his great leonine head and his oratory, and his far-reaching ambitions . . .

That would have been an alternative for Martin which would have given some people a laugh, had they known that he'd thought of it. Because, no matter how steel men regarded his policies, or how his workmen felt about him, the general public—including his would-be publisher—marked him with Capital and the capitalistic system. To them, his outlook was entirely reactionary. To hear some people talk, you would think that Martin had spent all his spare moments in shooting down the incompetent. That was because he didn't feel that the world owed everyone a living. His mere presence in such a gathering as the one he was planning to attend in Pittsburgh showed what kind of man he was—or would have showed it if his presence had been known, or if the meeting had not been secret. In 1936, Martin, and men like him, had been the current menace. Hitler was farther away then, and so was Stalin. Communism and Nazism had not come to mean merely slightly different aspects of the same thing.

Martin's legs felt heavy, and weak at the same time. They could hardly bear his weight. The clerk and the chauffeur had helped him into his car. On the drive he felt better, and he and the clerk chatted of this and that. A nice young man.

He'd never noticed him before. He remembered thinking he must look into his record and see if he couldn't get him a better job. He deserved something. He was most kind.

Eric, not expecting Martin at this hour—it was early in the afternoon—was out with the dogs. Martha, naturally, was at the office. Martin wouldn't have paid so much attention to how he felt—it wasn't a new feeling—except that he had to catch the night train. He didn't intend to be done out of his meeting. It was why he wouldn't let them telephone Martha or a doctor. A few hours' rest would set him straight. It always did. Pittsburgh would be hot of course, but it was hot everywhere this July—even in the Jersey mills. Matthew wrote that it was hot in Cambridge, where he was taking his examinations to get into the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the following fall. Pretty smart of the boy to be ready for a college like that before he was eighteen!

The house was cool enough, with big electric fans everywhere, and all the windows open, and what breeze there was blowing straight through. It had been suggested that Martin install air-conditioning. He really didn't need it. He took off his coat and loosened his collar and lay down on the bed in his room. A servant brought him some water—no ice. He mustn't have ice when he felt this way. The servant, or the clerk either, would have helped him to undress, but he didn't want a stranger fussing over him. Eric would be back soon and look after him. He sent the clerk away, having him phone the plant first to tell them everything was all right.

"Now you run along—don't go back to work—go home. Where do you live?"

"Hoboken."

That was a hell of a place to live, Martin thought. The fellow had probably never seen a house like Martin's, except from the outside. You could tell that by the way he tried to conceal his surprise at it. He should have seen it in the days of Frances, when everything was running at capacity. Even

with Matthew and Martha here, and a man to replace one of the maid servants, it was still half closed down. The occupants rattled in it—positively rattled. But the clerk wouldn't know that. Kendal, his name was—funny, how little things like that stuck in your mind. Why should Martin have remembered that his name was Kendal?

Martin lay back on the pillows and closed his eyes. He opened them again and Kendal was gone. The afternoon sun wasn't showing around the edges of the drawn curtains as brightly as it had been, and Eric was rising from a chair where he'd been sitting, evidently watching over what must have been Martin's slumbers.

"I wouldn't wake you, sir," said Eric. "I'm sorry I wasn't here when you came in. How do you feel, sir? Did you have a good rest?"

"I feel fine." He didn't really feel so fine, but he must reassure Eric, who seemed to be unduly concerned.

The man got his clothes off and helped with his bath and rubbed him down. He'd been working with him for about twenty minutes before he told him that Julian was downstairs waiting to see him.

"Who?" said Martin. He thought he'd heard the name correctly. He wasn't sure.

"Mr. Julian—"

"I can't believe it—"

"I couldn't myself, at first, sir. But it's him. There's no mistake. He insists on seeing you—says it's important."

"To whom?"

"That he didn't tell me, sir."

"Did you say I wasn't feeling well?"

"Naturally not, sir! I said you were in conference with your attorney and couldn't be disturbed. He said he'd wait. I think I should warn you, sir, that he's changed."

"So have we all."

"Yes, sir, but in Mr. Julian's case, sir—" Whatever Eric

had been going to say, he evidently decided would be either presumptuous or unnecessary. "You look very nice, sir," he said, instead.

"Do I, Eric?"

Martin examined the reflection given back from the long cheval glass. Eric had picked out for him a white linen suit and rather a bright blue necktie. He was thinner than he had been once. Time was when a white suit on Martin would have filled the landscape, but the flesh on him now hung so loose that—paradoxically—it didn't take up the room it once had taken. His hair was almost white, and his eyebrows, inclined to bushiness, were getting white, too. He had extremely good teeth for a man of his age, strong and yellowish in color—no emptiness in his mouth to mar and shrink the squareness of his jaw. But Martin had changed in these past years since father and son had seen each other, though in Martin's case—unlike Julian's—there could be no shock or need of warning. He looked a good deal more formidable than he felt. Julian, he had gathered, didn't look formidable at all. But he never had.

"I'll see him," Martin told Eric, "in the library." He hesitated a little—"And Mrs. Julian—when she comes in—she's not to—not to—"

"I understand, sir. She's not to come to the library. I'll see to it, sir."

Matthew, fortunately, was still in Cambridge. He'd be back soon, but not to-night.

Those few moments of waiting were an eternity to Martin. He wondered why Julian had come to see him, and felt that no good could come of the visit. What should he do? Be discovered seated at the big desk with the black leather-covered top and the intricate brass fretwork which made a little railing to keep objects from sliding off? What was the thing called—gallery, wasn't it? No, to sit before the desk would be too official—as if he were passing judgment. It was

a bit late for that. Julian must have passed judgment on himself long ago. He would stand at the windows, looking out, and, at his son's step, he would turn and cross over and greet him. He knew that Julian had changed. None of this change must show in Martin's eyes. He could be expressionless and yet smile a little—put out his hand, talk of trivial things like the weather and when it was that Julian had left Paris. Perhaps Martin had better not admit that he knew Julian had been in Paris.

And there was Julian in the door with Eric back of him. Did Eric have to escort him? Did he think he'd be stealing the spoons? Martin himself had a jumble of thoughts about what Julian might do, because there was Julian and yet not Julian—merely something Julian had become, like something discovered months after on a battlefield hastily cleared.

But that was a disintegration you could expect and see and discount, all at once. This you couldn't. Martin's visitor was unexpectedly presentable. Rather carefully presentable, as though for an occasion. He was too big—that was one thing about him. He wasn't worth the volume of his displacement. And there was that in his eyes and in his mouth, and in his whole face, which was quite without hope—hope being an almost universal human attribute. There was no flicker of it in Julian. And yet he must have come here with a purpose, and in any purpose there is hope—at least of its accomplishment.

"Well, Julian—" This went with the extended hand Martin had figured on.

"Well, Father—" The two hands met. The palm of Julian's was quite wet.

On a table a tray had been set, with whiskey and soda and glasses and ice in a bowl.

"Fix yourself a drink, won't you?" Martin invited.

"I think I will. Eric offered me a drink downstairs, but I said I'd wait."

He had evidently waited too long. He poured himself out a double measure. The soda was in a siphon. In releasing it into his glass he managed to spill some of it on the tray. He took his handkerchief and started to mop up the puddled water. Martin found rising within himself the familiar irritation which sight or knowledge of Julian's stupidities always caused him.

"Never mind that. Come over here and sit down."

There was a pause. It was Julian who spoke of the weather. "You know, I think it's cooler here than it is in Boston."

"Why Boston?"

"I've just come from there."

"I thought you'd come from Paris." Martin hadn't meant to say this, but it didn't matter.

"That was last month," Julian explained. "I've been in Boston since. My wife has a vaudeville engagement there."

Martin made a further admission of knowledge: "I thought you had a café in Paris—"

"We sold it."

"I hope you got your price," said Martin.

"No. Just what it would fetch. My wife got an offer to go to Rio."

"'Rolling down to Rio,' " Martin quoted, rather inanely.

"Oh, this wasn't a song. It was a contract. Steinberg. You wouldn't know him. He's a man who owns a string of places—cabarets, night clubs—not in New York, so much, though he had a place here at one time, but particularly in South America."

"Your wife didn't accept the offer? She didn't sign the contract?" Martin wasn't in the least interested in what Zari had accepted or signed, but he was trying to be polite about it. Besides, Julian must have had some purpose in telling him, which was connected with his purpose in coming to see him.

"She signed all right. But Steinberg wants her for the opening of a new place of his which won't be ready till the middle of August. We're in Boston because she met a man on the boat who fixed it for her, as long as we had the time . . ."

Julian paused. Martin noticed that he'd finished his drink, gulping it down. A drink like that should have lasted a man a good half hour, instead of a few minutes.

"Do you want another?" Martin asked, indicating the empty glass. More whiskey might speed up Julian, so he'd get to some point where his story concerned something.

"Thanks." Julian rose and crossed back to the table. He was careful with the soda this time and didn't spill any of it. But he didn't use much soda. "We'll fly down," he went on, "if we go. That doesn't take so long. She likes flying. It's expensive and spectacular."

"I take it that you don't like it?"

"Not so much."

It occurred to Martin to wonder what Julian had meant by "if." He had said, "*If* we go—" "There's some doubt whether your plans will go through?"

"That's it."

"What do you mean—that's it?"

"Well, she's got hold of a lawyer who says he thinks he can find a way for her to break her contract."

"Why does she want to break it? I'm sure she'll be a great success in Rio."

"That's what I tell her. She can do her stuff down there—nothing to stop her. Here they're so damn' fussy."

It seemed a strange attitude for a husband to take, Martin thought, but thank God, it had nothing to do with him!

"Yes," he said, "I suppose they are. And especially in a place like Boston."

He remembered Mrs. Lake, and certain remarks she had made about Boston. She had asked him if he had ever heard

of it, and he had classified it as a big factory town. She had gone on to speak of the Yankees in terms not too flattering. But as far as Zari was concerned, Martin's sympathies were entirely with them. All that was a long time ago. Mrs. Lake was an old woman now, living with her daughter, Lady Ammidon, in England. She wrote Martin now and then. Her latest letter announced the birth of a great-grandchild. Fancy that! She had said once, too, that while she had ideas about her own country, she wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

"Rio de Janeiro," Julian was saying, "isn't like Boston."

Martin came back with a start to the matters at hand. "No, I don't suppose it is. Does she wish to remain in Boston?"

The two drinks seemed to have affected Julian more than two drinks—even stiff ones—should affect a man. He'd better not have any more before he got through with what he had to say.

"As for me," he went on, "I don't have to break any contract with Steinberg because I haven't got any. Steinberg doesn't want me—he doesn't know enough to want me. Fact is, he even suggested that I didn't come along. Isn't that a laugh?" He waited in vain for Martin's appreciation of the humor and then repeated—"Isn't it?"

"Yes—yes, indeed. I'm afraid I don't entirely follow you—"

Martin's following him didn't seem to be important to Julian. "He doesn't know how useful I am—just being around—just picking up the pieces. But I should give a damn about that! I had it all worked out."

"What did you have all worked out?"

"Why—I'd turn over to her most of my money—keeping out just enough for me to get along on—it's paid quarterly, you know—the income—and then I'd put her on the plane. Maybe I'd go the first leg of the trip with her—but I'd turn

back anyway. I could hole in somewhere—take care of myself—might pull myself together again—who knows? Oh, I haven't any illusions about what I am, but you never can tell what might happen. That's what I thought. And now she says she won't go."

"I see," said Martin, "you were proposing to desert her, and she found it out and—"

"Oh, God no!" Julian cut him short. "She never found out a thing."

"She must have had some reason to change her mind." Martin wondered if Julian expected him to go to Boston and call on Zari, and counted on his powers of persuasion to make her change it back again. He was entirely opposed to this plan of Julian's to remain behind. What did the fellow expect to do with himself? Shed the years—shed his mistakes, as if he had never made them? "She may have found out, Julian, and she isn't telling you. She may not care to go without you—you say you're so useful. Why—else—would she suddenly upset everything? What object would she have?"

"Matthew," said Julian. "Her son, Matthew."

Julian's voice was blurred a little, like a word rubbed, or half-erased, on a typed page. But the meaning was perfectly clear. It was a blow falling which Martin had peculiarly discounted. But of course it had been foreordained. Whatever slight doubt there might be as to Matthew's paternity, there was no possible questioning of the fact that Zari was Matthew's mother. And now, like the devil, she had come to claim him.

"And where did she see Matthew?"

"He came to the show the other night, and backstage afterwards. She's daffy about him. Wants to take a house in Cambridge next fall, so she can be near him while he's in college. The devoted mother—that's a kind of a new role for her. She'll get sick of it after a while, but now it's

going strong. That's what I came to tell you. I thought you wouldn't like it. Though I really don't know what in hell you can do about it. The boy's old enough now, so if he wants to see his mother you can't very well stop him. You can't keep a grown boy from knowing his own mother—just casually—knowing her, seeing her, even if you are his legal guardian, and she isn't. If she were in Rio—well—she would get pretty much lost in Rio—and points west and points south. This contract—it calls for her appearance in a lot of towns which are not too easy to find. Something might be done about that—about the contract—if you were to talk with this lawyer she's picked up, and even to Steinberg himself. He's a pretty tough customer—he won't like her breaking it. She has a name, you know—straight from Paris. It's not so easy to find names who'll go to the places he wants her to go . . . You've got influence—you and Steinberg together could do a good deal. I always swore I'd never ask you a favor, because I know how you feel about what I did. Not a favor for myself, I meant. But you see this isn't for myself. It's for the boy. And a boy like him is worth ten of me. Just to prove I think so, I'll give up my plan to stay behind. I'll go to Rio with her—I'll stick it out—because what happens to me doesn't matter so much—not any more. It never did matter. I was never worth the powder to blow me to hell, and I knew it—I always knew it. So I'll go with my wife, and I'll engage that she doesn't come back—"

That voice going on and on, with a kind of blurred rapidity, made a dull point of fatigue in Martin's brain. Just the voice, without the freight of news it carried, would have been enough. But without the news, Martin wouldn't have had to listen. He could have stopped it if he hadn't liked it. But this wasn't a question of liking, or not liking. You couldn't keep a grown boy from knowing his own mother. No issue there. No issue at all. Zari wouldn't make an issue of it. She was clever. She would be very careful

in her claiming, and the poison of it would be cumulative in its effect, and eat in slowly to the fine human creature upon which Martin had placed most of his hopes.

She had taken Julian. But it was perfectly true what Julian had said of himself in his stimulated confidence. What happened to him didn't matter—never had mattered. What happened to Matthew mattered a great deal. All this and more beat into Martin's brain, and affected him with a sense to which he was unaccustomed, a sense of his own helplessness. Julian had this slender reed of a plan. He was offering himself on an altar of sacrifice. The sacrifice wasn't enough. How could he engage that Zari would never come back from Rio? How could he engage that she would go there in the first place, if she didn't want to go? A contract would mean little to a woman like her. She could be sued. She could be stopped from appearing for some other manager. She could be murdered in her bed, of course. But Julian wasn't a murderer, whatever else he was, and his father had no wish to suggest that he become one. That was something you were or you weren't—entirely apart from the accomplishment of the act. Why in her bed? There was an association of ideas, there. Martin had seen two of Zari's beds. One in the shabby hotel where she had been living with the Russian, Ivan, the other in the room—quite as shabby in its way—where she had been living with Julian. Her beds were doubtless fresher now, and softer, thanks to Frances.

A little pulse was beating in Martin's temple. He didn't feel well—less well than he had earlier that afternoon, when Kendal had brought him home from the plant. He was seated in this very same chair which he was occupying now, and he noticed in himself a tendency to clutch the carved arms, which were rather flat and wide to clutch. He hoped they were strong. Some of that old furniture was pretty well dried out and was brittle. And sometimes worms had

eaten the wood almost through, though it looked solid. He didn't want to break the chair. He didn't want to break anything. No violence. Just calm and quiet and the two of them trying to fix things between them—Julian and himself. Julian was having another drink—one of those stiff double drinks of his. Martin wouldn't have a drink. He wouldn't dare to have one, feeling as he was. He wasn't supposed to drink at all. It served to increase his blood pressure, which was already high.

"Give me a little plain soda without ice." That was an odd answer to all Julian had been telling him.

Julian looked at him and came over with the glass. "I'll jot down the address of the lawyer and of Steinberg—"

Why not? No harm in that. Julian crossed to the desk and made use of one of the yellow pads. He seemed soberer now, as if the increased dosage had given him a second wind. Martin was becoming accustomed to what he looked like. This was Julian—the only one there was. The younger Julian didn't exist any more—only the young Matthew, who must be saved from the wicked sorceress—the sorceress of the old myth, who cast spells, and turned men into what she wished, for her own nefarious ends. Such a simple and primitive legend, it was, in which Martin had become involved. It far antedated even the old chair and the portrait by Rembrandt and the Persian carpet and all the fine museum treasures with which this room was fitted. Why, the desk was the only modern piece. That had been made especially for Martin by a cabinetmaker shortly after the start of this twentieth century. That was what they were living in, Martin reminded himself—the twentieth century. A.D. nineteen hundred and thirty-six, according to the present calendar. A.D.—*Anno Domini*—that meant, in the year of our Lord. It was a purely empirical calculation, scholars had long ago decided.

"What does Matthew think of his mother?" Martin asked.

"He hasn't said. He doesn't know her well enough yet to have grown to hate her." Julian lightened this with a smile.

"I see," said Martin. Possibly he saw more than Julian had intended.

They both saw Martha—saw and heard her.

"Eric was so mysterious—said I wasn't to come in here—I was afraid you weren't well, the way he spoke."

For a moment Martha, standing there in the door, had no idea who Julian was. Though he was facing her, his back was to the light.

"Oh—"

"Hello, Martha," he greeted her.

You could see he half expected her to turn away, but instead she came forward and put out her hand: "Well, Julian, it's been a long time—"

Martin saw this present Julian again freshly, through Martha's eyes, and again was shocked.

"I'm afraid I owe you an explanation of why I'm here."

"Not at all. You have a perfect right to come and see your father. That's up to him—not to me." She turned then, as if to leave, but Martin didn't want her to.

"You'd better tell her, Julian."

"I suppose you think because she got me out of a scrape once before, she'll be able to do it again?"

"Oh, no—"

Julian turned to Martha. "This doesn't happen to be my scrape. But I'll tell you about it, if you don't mind—"

"If your father wants you to—"

"Not that there's anything you can or would do—"

The recital was briefer this time, leaving out all but the more salient facts. Zari would not be the best influence for Matthew, and a way must be found, if possible, to remove that influence before it got a foothold. She must keep her contract to go to Rio. The problem was, how to make her go. Martha listened, giving the thing that closeness of atten-

tion with which she favored any problem which anyone might bring to her, who had the right. And her occasional probing comments hastened, rather than interrupted, Julian's story. She brought the difficulty up into the present—placed it in the realm of business instead of folklore—and yet she said, immediately when the facts were complete before her, that she doubted if Mme. Zari could be reached by the law. It was the same doubt Martin had felt, but this had been part of his confusion. In Martha there was no confusion. A beautiful clarity seemed to enfold her. Martin wondered—in its light—what she thought of herself, seeing Julian like this.

"I met Mme. Zari only once," said Martha, "but she didn't strike me as a person who would be bothered much by the ordinary legal threats. There are other ways of reaching her, however."

"Such as?" asked Julian. He kept staring at his former wife, when she didn't know he was staring. She was engaged, at the moment, in lighting a cigarette. He got to her with his match an instant late.

She smoked altogether too much. It couldn't be good for her.

"Fear," she said, "real fear." She pronounced the words so softly that Martin barely heard them, as if it were nothing that a woman could be reached by fear and by nothing else.

She was evidently more at ease in the confines of barbarism than either of the men were—even more than Julian, who should have been used to such an area by now.

"And how are you going to scare her?" he asked, emphasizing the *you*.

"Me? How could I?" She was seated near the desk. She reached over and picked up the pad upon which Julian had written the addresses of Steinberg and the lawyer. He had indicated these a moment before, when he had been talk-

ing. She looked up: "We'll need one more. You remember that man—that Russian who ran the Russian troupe?"

"Ivan—Ivan Bashkir," Julian told her.

"Do you know where he is now?"

"He's in New York. There was a note about him in *Variety* last week."

"Then he can be found, can't he?"

"I guess so."

"My own confidence in Ivan was, at one time, sadly misplaced, so I wouldn't count on him too much now." This from Martin himself, who hadn't had anything to say for several minutes.

"Maybe he was getting a little weary of the situation at the time you speak of," Martha said, "and was glad enough to get it over." If she meant what her words conveyed, it was not what you would say in the presence of a woman's husband. But they were all of them a little beyond the finer points of etiquette. Perhaps there was no precedent for etiquette in this particular instance. She turned to Julian: "This Ivan—he isn't very successful, is he? I mean he isn't making a great deal of money?"

"I should doubt it. From what I read between the lines of that piece in the paper, I think he's trying to get money. He wants to start another troupe."

Martha seemed relieved. "Then that's all right."

Martin followed her thought. "What are you going to bribe this man to do, Martha?"

"Nothing drastic. Just get her on that plane for Rio."

Julian hesitated. "I've been under some rather unusual expenses lately, and I haven't any spare money to give him—not just now—"

"I have," said Martha. She rose. "You said he could be found. Well—let's find him. What are we waiting for?"

She picked up the hat which she had had in her hand when she had come in. She put it on, much as a man might,

quickly and firmly, there being no mirror in the room. It was a wide simple hat made of a rough sunburnt straw. The brim shadowed her face. She was wearing a linen suit which matched her hat in color.

Julian rose, but Martin didn't. He knew he would have trouble rising, and he didn't want to make any trouble which wasn't here already. Martha came over to him. She was so tall in her wide hat, and so straight and strong.

"I'm not doing this for him," she told Martin, indicating Julian with a nod of her head, "or even for Matthew. I'm doing it for you—just for you."

She bent down suddenly and kissed him, and then she was gone, to God knew what adventure and what danger, Julian following her. Julian was always doing that, it seemed to Martin. Time went back, and back again. But in the past Martin might have stopped them both. Now he couldn't, because he couldn't even get up. He was helpless.

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The clinical detail of his illness was a subject which didn't interest Martin in the least—neither then nor now. And now, the thing itself—the illness—was his constant companion. Then it had been, comparatively, a stranger—a stranger whom you see and finally wonder about a little, and see more frequently until the face becomes familiar, and then too familiar. No longer strange, it is there before you, like a beggar to whom you have opened your house. There was sometimes pain. The fatigue which stopped just short of pain was worse to bear.

Doctors were quite angry at him, Martin knew. He should have come to them a long time ago. And, when he did start coming, he might as well have saved his steps, they said. He would submit to no complicated and complete physical

examinations or treatments, or diets. He had been unfair to doctors—not given them a break, or a chance to show what they could do. This disease of his, this arterial disturbance, was characterized by no early and obvious symptoms. It was hidden from the eye until a certain amount of damage had been done. Therefore a great robust creature like Martin Lyndendaal should have gone to doctors anyway—say, when he was forty—no one could possibly be right after forty without medical aid—and let them make their beautiful discoveries.

It was a very superior disease indeed. It attacked the ambitious, the successful, the rich, the picked company of men who had the power to drive themselves to glory. Among these, it was the little and delicate organisms who escaped—the men who had something wrong with them definitely emerging at an early date—the men like old Jonathan Lake, who lived for years, and worked, too, with their brains alone, and subsisted on—what was it?—dry toast and skimmed milk and selected vitamins in capsules? A man might feel, as Martin did feel for the greater part of his life, perfectly well, and yet harbor within himself all this danger. He was seventy when the seriousness of his condition could no longer be denied. Had the doctors known about it sooner—well, they had known in a way, but they hadn't been given a free hand—had they known, they could, by diet and rest and restrictive measures followed to the letter, have prolonged his active period.

This was puzzling, because Martin gathered that his active period was the original cause of evil, and then, after that, a sort of symptom in itself. There was a while there, during his middle life, when he had lost what was called "the fatigue sense"—a condition to deceive anyone. He had been so ruddy and so hearty, and his energies had been the energies of ten men together. Then he grew tired, all at once, and

stayed tired, but forced himself on. Excitement, worry, the upheaval in which he lived—all this carried his condition forward. He shouldn't have been working that hot July, or any hot July. He shouldn't have laughed so hard that day in Fleetwood's office—little Tom Fleetwood whom he had already survived. What was he thinking of, a man of his age and and state, troubling himself with problems of ownership and management of a steel plant? Two steel plants, it was. And planning for more. Planning to take full advantage of the returning prosperity of steel until the responsibilities resting on his aging shoulders would be beyond all reason!

Even the doctors didn't tell him that had they known about his condition sooner, they could have brought him back his youth. No, they couldn't have done that—not even they. The trouble with doctors was that they were scientists and, like all scientists, had a supreme confidence in their personal ability to change the course of the tides. This was markedly true in the case of the ranking specialists with whom a man like Martin would have traffic. Scientists knew too much. What they knew might be true, but Martin had no wish to live his life according to their guidance.

Martin was a strong man. Everyone said that—how strong he was. But he took the comment more hopefully than it was made. He didn't realize that no one except himself could have expected him to recover. It would have been too much to expect, notwithstanding his fine organs which took so well the added burdens imposed on them by the nature of his disease. Doctors had a favorite word—prognosis. This was the act of foretelling the course and termination of an illness, also the outlook afforded by such an act. The prognosis in any given case, or at any given moment, could be good or bad. In Martin's, it could be nothing but unfavorable, and yet he lived on. To a point he

improved. It was a point a good deal like that reached in the successful experiment of keeping the heart of a chicken indefinitely alive, hardly benefiting the chicken from which the heart had been taken.

Martin was consistently inconsiderate of doctors. Why be stricken down in July, when all the great ones were away, and only a series of assistants could be summoned, palpitating, to the scene? What could they do for him? They couldn't even get him to bed, because Eric had already done that.

These young doctors thought Martin had had a stroke. It wasn't that, exactly. It was an attack, a spasm, and it might have been—though he couldn't get out of anyone a satisfactory verification of this—a weak spot in the arteries of the brain, which gave way and the blood poured out. He recovered from it sufficiently to say what he would do and what he wouldn't. He would rest. And he would stay in bed because he couldn't get out of bed—not without help. But he wouldn't go to a hospital—not even his own. Wasn't he enough exposed to the medical curiosity without that? No one had cared to force the issue.

They sent for too many people—doctors and nurses and Sarah. Sarah seemed to be there as soon as anyone, in spite of the three-hour trip it was in from Montauk Point, where she and Silverton had built a house. He was always glad to see Sarah, but there was no need to have her come hot-haste like this, as if he were on his death bed. They couldn't send for Martha, because no one knew where Martha was. Martin himself didn't know. That was the thread of consciousness that kept alive in him. What was she doing? How was she faring? And was it true that she had gone, as she had said, wholly for him, and not at all for Julian? What was a divorce? Words said by a judge, and papers signed. Did that make the difference it was supposed to make? If Martha had hated Julian—but she'd never hated him. It

was in pride that she had let him leave her. Perhaps her pride was sufficiently fed—sufficiently sated—seeing him as he had become.

Martin was unaware of the exact moment when Martha appeared. He woke from some brief sleep, and there she was, before him. She had seen Julian as he had become, and now she saw Martin. This was not a matter of pride at all. If she had never seen him—never in her life—she might have found a man who was her equal, a man such as Matthew might be ten years from now—that is to say, as Matthew might be if Zari Hanajos went to Rio. Would Zari go? Had she gone? Martin framed the question. He couldn't speak it, because of the big electric fan which was placed by the window and made a whirring sound right inside his head. But Martha knew what he wanted to ask, and she leaned close and answered him.

"The plane took off this morning, and Julian and Zari. That was a fine thing Julian did."

Martin found he could whisper—"What—what was fine?"

"He didn't want to go."

So Julian had told Martha about his wish to remain behind. Less than ever he would want to go now, leaving Martha whom he had stared at so that afternoon of his visit. And days must have passed. This must be next week. And there was nothing that Martin could do about it, except be grateful.

"Did you find the Russian?" he managed, whispering, "Ivan—"

"Yes, we found him. He was a great help. He had no scruples." Martha smiled, as if the memory of Ivan's lack of scruples had its pleasant side.

A nurse came in and spoke to her.

"Yes, I know," she answered the nurse, and then, to Martin—"You must rest now—you mustn't try to talk. I'll tell you all about it later."

Martin lay there, his shoulders propped up by the pillows, so that his head was high. "You will?"

"I promise. But there's nothing to worry you."

There never was, when you were helpless. You were told only so much as people thought it wise to tell. And they waited for their own good time to tell that much. There was an excuse always. There must be no excitement. But not being able to stand excitement was a two-edged sword. You could use it as well as others could—use it to get your own way, and not to submit to anything you didn't want to submit to. Before Martha was taken out of the room by the hovering nurse, Martin succeeded in asking her how Matthew was. What had happened to him?

"Why, Matthew's fine. He'll be back this afternoon. He thinks he's passed all his examinations."

That was important—more important than anything. That was the whole story. Matthew had passed his examinations and Zari was on her way to Rio.

Not quite the whole story, Martin felt. He never got the whole of it, but he got enough so that the little gnawing core of curiosity which remained in him wasn't too disturbing. It was one of those tales not to have been believed if it had been written down as fiction—Julian and Martha's finding the Russian, and Martha's bribing him to do that which he might have done without bribing.

When you were ill, people catered to you. They were afraid of you, or afraid for you, perhaps. It wasn't the kind of fear, of course, that the Russian had engendered in Zari Hanajos, to make her glad she had a chance to flee the country. He threatened Zari, not with death—that would be far too good, if it were sudden—but he promised that she would never have a moment's ease or peace. She was one of those women, he had told Martha, possessed of but the one thing—beauty. His threat, it seemed, was to that. In the past she had deceived him—she would deceive him no

longer. Revenge—that was it. It must have been as good an act as he was ever concerned in. He heard she was in this country. He sought her out. He had a score to settle. Well, perhaps he had. And here was money and the score together.

Twice he reached her during those few days, and twice she was rescued—almost miraculously—from his attacks. Some jail harbored him for the night. But—from a source unknown to Zari, at least—his fine was paid and he was out again. Secretly, Zari left for the airport, hiring detectives to guard her. The Russian's job was uncompleted until he had rushed out and shaken his fist at the departing craft. It was a delightful occasion all around, except perhaps for Julian. It wasn't clear to Martin just why—at the last—Julian had had to go, if he hadn't wanted to go.

"It was too risky, his not going," Martha said.

"How?"

"She wanted to take Matthew."

"She couldn't—"

"She might. It seemed to be either Julian or Matthew."

"Did the boy want to go?"

"In a way, perhaps. You mustn't blame him too much for being tempted to—"

"Turn his back upon his destiny?" Martin completed the sentence for her.

"I'm afraid we none of us do that," said Martha, smiling.

It seemed to Martin that Martha smiled a great deal now. Perhaps it was an act, like the act the redoubtable Ivan had staged—and as false—because she could have little to smile about, really.

Martin must give the doctors credit for one thing. Now that he was delivered into their hands, his improvement was extraordinarily rapid. In August he was well enough to be taken down to Montauk. A cottage was obtained for him there, jutting out between bay and sea. The air was

fresh and clean and the sunlight swept the place. He would have stayed at Sarah's house, except that he was freer as he was, and the retinue of people he had to have made too many. His carcass might be useless in many respects, but not in solving the unemployment problem. That month was an unreal interlude. No work. Nothing but air and special food and rest and, at carefully arranged hours, people sitting and chatting with him. He must be quiet but never deserted. Martin was sure that so it had been decided.

Fanny came East, and the great Hazzard Blue had business in New York and joined his wife at Montauk for the weekends. Martin had heard about Hollywood. He'd never seen it before—not in the flesh, or in person, as the phrase ran. It was meant to be impressive, and was. Hazzard Blue was one of the biggest names in one of the world's largest industries. The responsibility, he told Martin, just from the financial angle, was terrific. He spoke of the good old days of the flesh-and-blood theatre with a touch of scorn, as though at that time he had been playing with chips reckoned in buttons. His public was now the world. Martin, being old and ill, sat in his presence, but it might have been suspected that others, not so fortunately placed, did not sit. Yet Hazzard Blue was very charming, with that ready Irish smile of his, and the soft speech, and the grace he still possessed, though he carried a little more weight than he had in the past. Fanny was very sweet and very domestic. That was her line, Sarah said. She was the perfect wife of the great man.

Martin's other son-in-law put in occasional appearances. Morris Silverton was doing well with the MAMMOTH. He was becoming a great man, too. It was almost overpowering, so much greatness everywhere displayed, and—to Martin—in such new guises. But he expected to be back in steel again in the fall, and then all would be well. It was mostly women who were Martin's companions during this period, and

women were not quite so great. Among the women was his widowed sister-in-law Emily, who came for a visit to her niece. Emily had changed so much. He remembered her so well as a girl, frightened and eager, and now she was an old woman. But he'd never really known her as a girl. He knew her better now—much better. He had a strange talk with her one afternoon. They spoke of Tom, and Martin told her what an able lawyer he had been considered.

"Yes—I know—"

"I hope you've been happy, Emily." Martin didn't know why he said that, except that he meant it.

She didn't answer him at once, but looked off at the uneven beach line which Montauk presented, and at the waves which broke and broke again before they came to shore. "I suppose you know why I married Tom?"

"Why—I—"

"I married him because Frances had married, and I wanted to do as well as she had. For a while, I thought I'd done better—from a worldly point of view, I mean. That pleased me, because I wasn't nearly as clever as Frances, or as pretty, or as anything."

"Why, you were very pretty, Emily!"

"Thank you, Martin. You're so kind. You've always been kind and good—and generous. I admire you more than anyone I've ever known. I always have. I'm so sorry you're sick. I wish that there was something I could do for you. But of course there isn't. You have Martha and Matthew and Sarah. And you have that good man, Eric, to look after you. You have all their devotion and all their loyalty. Tom never had that—not from anyone—not even from me, really. If he had, I wouldn't be saying these things." She looked at Martin, and then she began to weep very softly into the black-bordered handkerchief which she brought from the folds of her black gown. But if a widow couldn't weep, who could?

Emily had bought a large place, all complete, on the west coast of Florida. She spent her winters there. She had always wanted to do that, it seemed, as she hated the cold. And she didn't have to be alone. Sarah said it was a crime the way certain of her relations batted on her—particularly Gordon's family, who had always managed to subsist luxuriously on the bare edge of nothing. Martin doubted if Emily would mind—in fact she must find it rather pleasant.

That month at Montauk did Martin a great deal of good. He was actually walking about a little—slowly, with a cane, but walking. Everyone said that he was quite himself again. Not that they meant it. But it was obvious that he might have gone on like that for years, being waited on hand and foot, being the recipient of idle gossip, realizing little by little that life would never hold anything more. Fanny returned to Hollywood and wrote him from that eminence a long letter on deckle-edged paper with words heavily underlined. She had been, evidently, hesitant about saying certain things—saying them right to his face—but she outlined his course fairly clearly:

"It isn't as if you *had* to work, Father! You could sell your steel business and settle down very, *very* comfortably. If you wanted to, you could come out and stay with us. We have a *great* big house." Martin knew it was big—he'd seen photographs of it. "The California climate I *know* would do you a great deal of good. It would really make a new man of you." He didn't want to be a new man. He wanted to be as he always had been. Doctors pulled long faces and took his pulse and his blood pressure and every kind of specimen. One of them, more brutal than the rest, gave him—if he returned to work—six months to live. Martin refused to accept any such gift. He knew he was ill. But you could go on being ill and still attend to what had to be attended to. His collapse had been a warning. He must be more careful—that was all. Sarah said she didn't trust what he might mean by "careful."

He offered to compromise—go to the office when he got back, but not to the mills. He must do as little, and not as much, as possible. Well, he could hold on—he could at least do that. He could hold on, even against Charlie Rosch, who approached him with an offer to buy his plants outright—lock, stock and barrel. Charlie Rosch knew what most people didn't know, how serious Martin's condition was. The old buzzard.

Martha was wonderful. If Martha had been a man, and had had the necessary experience, and been able to take hold completely, Martin might have turned all his responsibilities over to her. As it was, she relieved him of most of the non-technical details—and for those he had technical men. He acted, for the most part, as a presence, a figurehead, a plaster image dressed in men's clothes propped in the window to draw fire. MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, still in person. People didn't know—neither Rosch nor anyone else outside of the immediate household—how, that following winter, when Martin returned from the office he always had to go directly to bed. He schooled himself not to get excited about anything. He cultivated a sort of oriental calm. What he was doing, apart from the immediate necessities, was arranging his affairs so that they might go on without him until Matthew could be of use. Martha and Matthew could manage, and eventually Matthew alone. It would be too much to expect that Martha would remain forever. What would Martha do, eventually? Martin didn't know. What did women do who were single, and had no children and no families? But that wasn't Martin's problem.

That following winter was the winter of the big sit-down strike at GENERAL MOTORS, and the final victory for the strikers. It was the winter when U. S. STEEL reached an agreement with John Lewis's C.I.O. In most instances, lesser companies refused to reach any such agreement. Martin thought they were foolish, and said so, and signed up with the enemy. As usual, he personally avoided the strikes which

followed. That was one thing he could do, he could handle labor. He wondered how Matthew would get along with it. Matthew, with his Hunkie ancestry, and his highly specialized education, and the sense he had—doubtless largely a matter of his youth—of knowing everything. What would Martha do, and how would Matthew get along? These were almost the first questions, having to do wholly with the future, which came to Martin's mind.

Matthew came back from his first year of college. It was from the boy himself that the suggestion came that he spend his vacation in the mills. He could gain there a valuable practical experience. Martin thought it was a fine idea. So did Martha. Sarah disapproved of it. Sarah disapproved of a lot of things now. She wasn't so young any more, though she looked young—more like Sylvia's sister than her mother. Frances had looked young, too, at that age, but different. Perhaps it was a difference of fashion and of period. Martin promised that both he and Matthew—and possibly Martha—would come down to Montauk for a little while during the latter part of August. But in August Martin wasn't going anywhere. His collapse, this second time, was much worse than the first collapse had been. It was so much worse that he remembered very little about it.

All he remembered was going to the office one morning, the same as other mornings. Martha wasn't there. She had some appointment outside. The Jersey mill superintendent had come in to see him, and something the man said—just casually—set at work in Martin a great longing to see the place. He hadn't been there in more than a year. And now Matthew was there—doing well, too—all the more reason to go out and look things over. How could it possibly hurt him—just once?

His car had left Martin at the office and gone away again. He ordered it back. Then it occurred to him that perhaps his own chauffeur would refuse to drive him to the mill,

knowing he wasn't supposed to go there. That was the trouble with being ill, or having been ill, you didn't have any authority any more. You couldn't give orders and be sure that they wouldn't be offset by orders considered more binding. Martin walked now by aid of a heavy rubber-tipped cane. Considering his disabilities, he made excellent time out of the office and into the elevator which carried him to the street. The mill superintendent had a car parked around the corner. Martin negotiated that distance, too. The trip itself was not easy. Martin sat cramped in the small seat.

It was good being back, like having come home after a long and dangerous journey. His presence was soon known. Quite a celebration was made. Whistles were blown. The business of the mill stopped as much as it could stop, considering the exigencies of the precious metal. Everyone whose immediate duties permitted came and spoke to him and wished him well. Matthew couldn't. Matthew was driving a traveling crane, sitting in the cage where all the controls were. That was quite a job—quite a responsibility. You had to know what you were doing, or you might make mistakes both dangerous and costly. It wasn't a job you could be given just because your name was Lyndendaal.

Martin was looking up at his grandson, trying to bring him closer and clearer with his eyes at least, when he began to experience a great difficulty in breathing. He hadn't realized how hot it might be here in the mill on a summer day.

"I don't believe I can make it," he said.

The superintendent was with him, and some of the men—quite a group of people surrounding him. They couldn't have known what it was he couldn't make. In fact, he had no recollection of knowing, himself. The place seemed not only hotter than he remembered it, but darker. And then very dark, all of a sudden, and a paroxysm convulsed him which might have been the cause of the sharp cry he heard, and wasn't sure whether it had come from his own throat.

When Martin first became conscious of the banging and the hammering, he thought they were building his coffin. But it was merely the alterations in progress, the alterations which Martha and Sarah between them had decided upon for Martin's comfort and convenience. As Martin wouldn't go to a hospital the hospital was coming to him. The unused drawing room on the floor below, which adjoined the library, would make for him a perfect bedroom—much better than his present one. And then he could go directly from his bedroom into his library, and sit down in his big chair there, and look out of his windows. It gave him something to anticipate—this prospect—it would be a step in the recovery which no one really expected him to make. He himself thought he'd get well. In fact, he took it for granted—or nearly so—and talked of a prospective trip to Denmark. No matter how much Denmark had changed, there would still be farms there, and Anna and her farm. Martha showed him a letter from Anna, who was happy and in good health, still. One of her cows had taken a prize at the Cattle Fair. She was sorry to hear Cousin Martin was ill. He must surely come and visit her as soon as he was able. Yes—surely.

Instead of to Denmark, he went to the floor below. He was allowed at first to look through into this big room and see his things all waiting for him. The big chair was drawn up near the windows and there was a little table beside it. All that view through was just something to see, and then the time came when he was taken in, as a man might really go to Denmark or to a country even stranger. At first the mere sitting tired him, and then he began to feel better. The doctors were greatly encouraged—against their proved judgment. He was able to discuss the problems of the mills and look over reports and make suggestions.

Stocks were going down again. It was a wonder to Martin that they let him see the newspapers—protected as they kept him—and find out about things like stocks. But it might have been worse for him, not letting him see them. It might have given him the idea that if his coffin had not been built, it had nevertheless been chosen. Stocks going down, and the Japanese attack on China, and a pattern of something which was very like war breaking out from underneath in various parts of the world. It was undeclared, often enough. It didn't have to be. There was plenty of news. The defeat of the President's Supreme Court proposal, the honeymoon of the ex-king of England with the lady of his choice, the advice of a woman named Dorothy Dix, on affairs of the heart, and the minute by minute news—and gossip—of a man named Walter Winchell.

All that fall and winter, Martin consumed newspapers, much as he consumed what was known as a protein-free diet, in order to keep himself alive. Then the news became a drug, a soporific. It meant less and less. He found himself not following it. He learned to play solitaire, a game he'd never played before. His nurses became a nuisance to him—he couldn't stand having them about—but it would be too much for Eric, Martha and Sarah said, not to have them. Besides, there was the dog to consider. Eric had to take the dog out for walks. That was the young dog. The original Gustavus Adolphus died. He was buried in a very nice dog cemetery, with a little tombstone over his head.

In the spring of 1938 business was getting better again, and MARTIN LYNDENDAAL, INCORPORATED, was holding its own, in spite of the absence of its head. Matthew came home from his second year at college and went again into the mills. He went to the mills near Pittsburgh this time—he ought to learn something of all his domain—and he would be able there to do some extra work at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Some people thought he should have stayed in New York with

his grandfather, but that was nonsense. Martin wasn't going to stay in New York himself. He was going again to Montauk. It had done him so much good there two summers before. Even the doctors advised the change, and Sarah was able to engage for him the same cottage which he had formerly occupied. His strength amazed people. The journey, accomplished in a private ambulance, tired him hardly at all. His car followed, with Eric and luggage and servants and the dog. Martin had seen no reason why he shouldn't ride in his car himself, but the ambulance was considered better for him. If he'd made an issue of it, the doctors might not have let him go.

Again greatness and women and, this summer, a new companion. Two years before, his youngest grandchild, Martin Silverton, had been away at some very special camp. This year he was here. Martin and he took quite a fancy to each other. The young Martin was a little older than Axel had been when Martin had first known him. Axel was his cousin—not too close—and there was something in the boy that reminded Martin of Axel. He was not a Lyndendaal at all. Neither had Axel been. He had a delicate fine-drawn and sensitive face, which would have been pale, if it were not for the sea tan which covered it. He looked like his father and like Sarah, too.

The problem was, Sarah said, not to let him forge ahead too much in his studies. He had a reputation at school for brilliance. Being permitted only so many hours of reading, and not caring greatly for games, in the summer he had time on his hands. He took his grandfather over as a sort of special charge—a charge who had never been so flattered. Sarah was afraid the boy might be a nuisance. He never was. Sarah said that if you'd let him he'd talk your ear off. That might be true, but it was never a noisy chatter. The young Martin had a great deal to say for himself. Martin kept forgetting that he was a child, and found himself frequently

drawn into discussions you didn't usually have with children. There was this matter of race.

"Do you think of yourself as a Dane all the time, Grandfather?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"You should. You were born in Denmark, and both your parents were Danish. I was born here, and only one of my parents is Jewish, and yet I think of myself as a Jew. All Jews do that."

"Isn't it a mistake?"

"No. We're proud. We have to be. We might forget we were Jews if we were allowed to forget it, but we never are. I go to a very good school. It's a school I would never have got into if it were not for Mother, and the fact that we have money, and also that I am brighter than most boys of my age, and therefore a credit to any school. So they let me in, in spite of my being a Jew. I'm the only one there. So what can I do but be proud, and talk about it when the subject comes up?"

"Does it come up?"

"Sometimes. I know they would rather that I did not talk about it, but I cannot help that. Hitler is persecuting the Jews—throwing them out of Germany—which is a very stupid thing to do, any way you take it. Some day I shall tell Mr. Hitler exactly what I think of him. In fact I think I shall tell everybody—"

"What you think of Hitler?"

"No, what I think of everything."

"You think so many things. I'm afraid you'll have to live to be a very old man—older than I am—in order to have time for that!"

"Not necessarily. It would be just a question of arranging my time. I hope you won't want me to go into the steel business with Matthew—and Father has already promised that I shall not have to go into the baking business with him—

because then my time couldn't be arranged as I would like. I should like to know everything—"

"Another large order—"

"Well—one thing, anyway. I should like to know how to write."

"Why, you do write, Martin—very nicely."

"Oh, I don't mean handwriting! I mean, I want to be a writer."

At that time, Martin had never known any writers. He looked at the child curiously. "Is being a writer something that takes a long time to learn?"

"You wouldn't know, would you?"

"I wouldn't. I always thought writing was a sort of gift—something you were born with."

"Partly . . . Only partly. It's very difficult to set things down on paper. The paper comes between you and what you want to say. You have to learn to get over that feeling. Just thinking doesn't do you any good, or just talking, either, though it's very pleasant. And sometimes I don't think at all—I just see. And I haven't any opinion about what I see. Now look at old Eric. He's a very nice man—one of the nicest men I ever knew—yet he's a servant. I know you don't treat him exactly like a servant, but he is one. What is there in his brain that makes him a servant, and what is there in your brain that makes you able to hire him? I should like to know. But even if I didn't know, and yet could set down the characters of you and Eric as they appear to me, it would be a sort of record. If I could set down what I think and also what I see, it would make a record of ideas and people and things. That's important—I don't quite know why—to me it's more important than making steel or selling cakes."

Martin assured him that he would never be asked to make steel. Though it might do him good. He might learn through the making of steel some of the many things he wanted to know. They couldn't all be learned sitting by the side of an

old man on a piazza which looked out over a sea beach.

"I wouldn't mind," said the boy, "if I could sit here forever and see everything that came along. There must have been Indians once, and people before that, and before that strange animals that we don't have around any more. After the Indians, I suppose there were what is called settlers, and then more settlers, and then men who came to hunt and fish, and then gradually the place got built up as it is now—only not quite as it is now, because people were different in what they did, and wore different clothes and had a different idea of what makes a good time. I'd like to see it all and write it all down—everything they do—everything they've always done—and why."

"That would be very interesting, Martin—"

"Yes, wouldn't it? But there are other things which would be just as interesting. Now look at Matthew. I understand that his father married Matthew's mother a long time ago. Then they got divorced and he married Aunt Martha. Then they got divorced, and he married Matthew's mother again. But you, meanwhile, had adopted Matthew, so he lives with you. Now why all that? Can't people make up their minds what they want to do? Again, look at Matthew. He's older than I am, and much stronger than I ever will be, and everyone's crazy about him. He's going into the steel business when he's through college. He'll probably be just like you some day—he's very much like you now. But even he doesn't know his own mind—not entirely. It wasn't so many years ago when he and Sylvia were so crazy about each other. Then that calmed down. Sylvia came out. He went to college. They're still good friends, but that's all. There wasn't any need of all the excitement. Sylvia's got a football player now, and some older man—nearly thirty—who's in Wall Street. And I don't doubt that Matthew has had all kinds of girls. People worry so much about things that never happen."

Yes, the young Martin was a very unusual boy. His great-

uncle, on his father's side, was a Rabbi. The Rabbi might be able to teach him something, too. But such knowledge would be of the past. This boy thought about the past—Indians and settlers and extinct animals—but he was, in fact, the young inquiring voice of a future of which Martin, the elder, knew but little. He was the non-technical serum in a mechanized blood. It was, to his grandfather, a curious conception of life, the boy had, to be forever the observer, the recorder. It was a conception which, at that time, he hadn't thought about a great deal. Since then, he had thought about it more, and was able to understand it better. Since then, so much had happened—so much and so little.

That first summer, two years before, which Martin had spent at Montauk—not a whole summer, it had been a month, only—had done Martin a great deal of good. This one didn't. At the end of it he wasn't as strong as he had been at the beginning. Perhaps there was a limit to strength. Matthew offered to give up college and go into the mills on a permanent basis. He knew enough, he said. But everyone said no to this. He must go on. Martin returned to New York, private ambulance and all. This was one thing Martin accomplished. The young Martin, as a great treat, was allowed to ride with him. Sarah was still down there. She was closing her house. She might have saved herself the pains. Martin and his namesake arrived in New York the day before a great storm struck the Mid-Atlantic coast, and the coast of New England, and the long narrow island on whose north-eastern point Sarah's house stood—or had been standing up to the afternoon of the storm.

That had been Morris Silverton's mistake, Martin said, building it of wood. Still, they were lucky, at that. No one was drowned in the rising water or crushed beneath the weight of falling timbers. Silverton had always been lucky. His family, born in America, were uninjured by the hurricane. His family, born in Europe, might never have emigrated

from a part of the world where the Jews were being treated even less well than they had been in the past. The Jews were essentially a peace-loving people. So were the Americans. So were the English, evidently, from the concessions they were making—and were afraid not to make—to the man who was advancing, with a kind of dreadful slow precision, over the face of Europe. This man didn't care about peace, one way or the other. It was all right to care about power, but he desired absolute power over everything.

That winter, a full year ago now, was spent by Martin completely under the jurisdiction of his doctors. He began to wonder how much longer the machine which was his body would keep turning over. He asked the doctors and, having been wrong before, they refused to commit themselves. He suggested the possibility of a return to Denmark. The doctors forbade that, of course. It would be unwise. Besides, conditions in Europe were such that even a well man of Martin's age might well hesitate to go abroad when he didn't have to. Denmark was neutral, but so were a lot of other countries neutral. Neutrality was no guarantee of safety—not as things were now—not for the small countries. Martin let the idea of Denmark go. It was during this winter that he dismissed his nurses. This, he insisted upon. And then, right on top of the dismissal, the night nurse, Reilly, was hired. Before she went to Florida for the winter, Emily came to see him. She bade him an elaborate farewell—more elaborate than usual. Martin was quite sure that she never expected to see him again. Rosch, who still could walk, dropped in whenever he could. Rosch was quite excited about the new possibilities of steel. He wasn't allowed to go to his mills, either, but he had good people in charge, just as Martin had.

Considering the turmoil of the world outside, it was a curiously blank winter for Martin. It was difficult for him to recall it in any detail. He kept getting it mixed up with

think of it as a series of happenings, when, to Martin himself, nothing happened. Anything might, of course. He waited, sitting here and looking out at the Park trees. Bare, the branches were, all winter, except when there was snow. There wasn't a great deal of snow this winter, Martin thought. In the spring the branches looked more alive, and then a little thin thrusting of pale green began to cover them. Nineteen-thirty-nine. The spring—Martin seemed to feel better in the spring. Charlie Rosch always said he felt better in the autumn, but Rosch's birthday fell in the autumn—that might make a difference. He said it did. Rosch in his old age had taken up astrology. All your life was laid out for you by the position of the stars, not only at the season, but at the hour, of your birth. That was a form of bunkum to which no degree of senility could have persuaded Martin. Besides, the positions of the stars were based on calculations which had been proved wrong—calculations made by early astronomers who didn't know what they were talking about!

Rosch and Martin argued this matter at some length, until Eric came in and stopped them. Arguments were bad for both of them. It was better that they discuss matters which admitted of no argument, like their own early days. They agreed so heartily that those days were better than these days—better, even, than the period which was now drawing to a close. Yes, those were the days, called cut-throat, called piratical, when you dealt in tangible assets, and with opponents who spoke your language and used your weapons—or at least the language you had learned and the weapons you could handle. Rosch and Martin had been part of a sort of inner circle of glory. Their battles had been fought fair and clean, as befitted war among Titans. Outside this circle, though not wholly outside its view, poverty stalked the earth, and suffering, and the public could be damned as neatly as it ever came to be damned. Cut-throats? Hell! Branded as such on their tough young skins which didn't feel the branding

iron. The condition revealed in this decade immediately past was far more dangerous. That was a danger you couldn't see. It was a deep and intangible dishonesty reaching out jelly-like tentacles to snare the unwary. Gradually the change had come, while they had been busy. Too busy to look out of the window as they were both doing now.

From Martin's windows you could see the Park and the trees budding and the little winding paths and children playing. As soon as he was able, Rosch said, Martin must come over to the river and sit on Rosch's terrace. From the terrace, the view was broader. Trust Rosch for that!

It was a great day for Martin when he received the letter from the publisher suggesting that he get together material for a history of his life. Nobody had made Rosch any such offer. Naturally, Rosch was inclined to underestimate the compliment.

"How much is he going to stick you for it?"

"Not a cent! He pays me—five hundred dollars when I sign the contract—and hires a fellow to do the work besides—"

Martin felt better already—much better. It was a wonderful idea.

"Well," said Rosch, "if you're satisfied . . . Time was when your life was worth more than five hundred dollars . . ."

"I didn't know," Martin parried, "that a price had ever been set on it before."

Martin had thought his way around the clock now, and come back in his thought to where he'd started from, with the book and the publisher and Benison. It hadn't taken him very long to decide that there would be no book, except in his thoughts. It had taken him a little longer to get around to liking Benison, for himself. That summer and autumn wouldn't have been nearly as pleasant for Martin if it hadn't been for Benison's visits. Rosch wasn't feeling very well and couldn't come so often, and the Silvertons were down at a

hotel in Montauk superintending the rebuilding of their house. Matthew was working in the Jersey mill—and not running a traveling crane either—and Martha was busy at the office.

Martha had charge of things now in many ways. Martin had given her a power of attorney so that she could sign his checks—checks that didn't go through the regular accounting department. Martin could sign his name, too. He had a special fund at a separate bank. He'd always had one. It was on this bank that he made out a check to Benison. It was a present. Martin didn't owe him anything. But five thousand dollars would give him a certain amount of time, free and clear of any publisher or any contract. That was much better than leaving him something in his will. Martin's will was made some time ago, and he had no wish to change it, or give any lawyer the chance to say it could be broken because Martin's mind had been affected by his illness.

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Martin felt it rather on his conscience that Matthew wasn't in Pittsburgh again this summer. But Martha made out quite a case that he was needed where he was. Not in New York, so much, not in the house with Martin, sleeping there at night—that wasn't the point at all—he was needed at the near-by mill. What a chance the boy had! And the unusual feature of the thing was that he had a full appreciation of his chance. Martin had played in luck, taking him. And he'd played in luck with Martha. Where would he have been without either of them? He would still have had a hard life's work behind him, and his work would have gone for nothing. Whatever happened now, it wouldn't do that. He had accumulated property and experience, and at least the remnants of these would be handed on. If these went

for nothing now, it would be for some cataclysmic disaster which nothing could face down. The torch—Martin's torch—might be blown dark by a great wind, but it wouldn't flicker and die.

Matthew was not his son, but he might as well have been. What matter was it that Julian came in between them? He was his own flesh and blood—an admixture, a compound, formed from that and also from other substances finer and coarser. Matthew, all the way back, was an experiment which had, miraculously, turned out successful. Martin could say this, now that Matthew was approaching twenty-one and had survived certain dangers. At least he liked to feel that he could say it. He was a serious-minded boy, and he worked very hard, and yet there was nothing of the prig about him. The diversions of youth still appealed to him.

That summer had in New York one great spectacle, that collection of exhibitions which had been so extravagantly erected over the swamps and ash-heaps of Flushing Meadows, and was known as the New York World's Fair. There was another one in San Francisco. For Martin, unfortunately, the one was about as easy of access as the other—and he would have liked to go. He wanted to see the samples of his own work which were on display in the Hall of Metals. He heard, too, that Ford's first car was out there, the first car that Henry Ford had ever built. He would have liked to see that, too. Matthew saw it—he saw everything. Working in the Jersey mills, he had some evenings off, and the Fair was decidedly the place to go to. Speaking of his fondness for the diversions of youth, Matthew's favorite occupation at the Fair was going up in a mechanical parachute—up several hundred feet—and then being dropped suddenly, almost to earth. Matthew paid for this planned disaster the not insignificant sum of forty cents.

Yes, Matthew saw everything. He even saw the King and Queen of England. He met them and shook hands with

them. So did Martha. Martin had been invited to meet them, but that was another thing he must forgo. Much political significance was accorded to the Royal visit by the knowing. That was a matter about which Martin was not in a position to judge. Martha said they were very pleasant and that she couldn't help feeling a little sorry for them. This she refused to explain further. Perhaps her reasons for feeling sorry for England's rulers were reasons which Martin should not be told. He was more and more protected all the time, as you might protect a child from knowledge of any evil.

And meanwhile, there was war and more war. Autumn came, and winter. Matthew didn't finish his final year at college. Possibly Martha had a hand in that—possibly she didn't. At any rate, Matthew came home unexpectedly in November and didn't go back. He went straight into the mills, where, God knows, he was needed. Martin felt disappointed about the college, but he was unable to insist. Martha was at the helm now—Martha and Matthew between them. And Matthew was not Martin's son, and Martha was not his daughter.

It mattered much more with her than it did with the boy, that Julian came in between them. She was Martin's kin, his cousin, Axel's child and Anna's. She presented no racial problem. Her forebears had tilled the soil—one soil—as far back as memory could reach. But there was no peasant cloddishness in Axel. That fine and delicate strain which informed his mind must have stemmed from some source unknown. It was in Martha, too, toughened, as though the exact and suitable alloy had been added to the seething mass at just the right time and in just the right proportions. The result was Martha Christiansen. Martha Christiansen Lyndendaal, the name was. Sarah still called her sister, but that was because she had once been Julian's wife. And Martin loved this woman who bore his name more than he would have ever loved anyone if he had never known her. An odd thought

came to Martin now—an odd doubt. How important was that?

He had often felt that the love he gave to this woman whom he had never understood, or been able wholly to explain, even to himself—even in his own mind—far outweighed any other single force or motive in his entire life. Facing truth, as he was trying to do, and sorting from it as much dust of falseness as would fall through the sieve of his thinking, Martin wondered just what was the nature of the bond between himself and Martha. Or did such bond exist at all, save as a figment of his fancy? Did Martha herself exist as a reality, or as a summation, only, of everything that Martin had discovered to be perfect? Most women, however much you loved them, reminded you, here and there, of women whom you had not loved so well. Martha never did. She was for Martin a unique being, and he had caught her and brought her home and put her in a cage. The cage door would open soon.

The turn of the year had come and gone. Nineteen-forty. If anyone had ever told Martin, when he was young, that there would be such a year and he would be alive in it, he would have regarded the statement as entirely without interest. Such a distant point in time was something you couldn't reach. And now it was here. And the eyes of the world were turned upon a people whom Martin had always scorned a little. But you couldn't scorn the Finns now. They were fighting for their lives with the most extraordinary gallantry, and—it seemed to Martin from what little he could know of it—with a very scant measure of help from anyone. What was Sweden doing? What was Sweden afraid of? It wasn't any time for fear.

They didn't want Martin to talk about it. Eric was forbidden to bring him a newspaper or turn on his radio to any news. Scraps of information trickled through to him from Benison and occasionally from Matthew. Matthew told him that he and Martha were very much worried about Anna.

They thought she ought to come back to America—get out, as Matthew put it, while the getting was good.

"Has Denmark been threatened?" Martin asked. "Russia wouldn't want Denmark—they wouldn't know what to do with it when they got it."

"Oh, no," said Matthew, "there's no danger from Russia."

"As regards the main war, isn't Denmark neutral?"

"Yes, of course. It's difficult to know what is best. I should hate to think of Mother Anna racketing around the North Sea on a ship whose safety against submarines could not be guaranteed by anyone."

"Yes," said Martin, "I should think she would be quite as well off on her farm."

"I suppose so."

The question arose again. This time from Martha. They had to discuss it with Martin because they needed his help. He knew people in Washington. Having Anna return could be managed, but not easily, not by buying her a ticket and having her put on a steamer. Martin was allowed to dictate some letters. A man from the Danish Consulate in New York came up to see him.

"There is, always, the element of danger," the man warned.

"It would be a quick danger," Martha replied, "soon over. This is constant. If you're in a burning building, you don't sit there in a room which hasn't yet caught fire because you're afraid of going through the flames to get out!"

"I should hardly describe Denmark as a burning building!" the man from the Consulate protested.

"I didn't mean that," Martha explained. "All Europe is burning, and all neutrals are rooms to which the flames haven't spread."

"I hope that's not true."

"I hope not."

The man looked at her. "You steel makers—you're apt to be a little unduly pessimistic about the spread of flames."

"I'm afraid you're right. I sent ten thousand dollars to the Finnish Legation yesterday, in case you're interested. I'm not taking any profits, except the money that has to go back into the plant for improvements."

Martin was a little stunned at this, but he certainly wouldn't have given away the fact, before the stranger, that this was the first he'd heard of it.

"Both Mrs. Lyndendaal and myself," he said, "feel that we must do everything we can to aid."

"Yes," said the man, "of course. And Mrs. Lyndendaal feels that her mother should return. I will do everything I can, also."

Anna herself was the person who finally decided the matter. A letter came through from her in which she stated that she had no intention of returning.

"I am a Dane," she wrote, "a loyal Dane. If Denmark is threatened with trouble it is for me to share that trouble. I have people here who are dependent on me. I have my own place to care for. If I left I cannot tell you how sorely I should be missed."

Martha was a person who liked to have her own way, and when this was denied her she didn't take it with a good grace. Her worry over her mother's state was tinged with anger at what she called her idiotic obstinacy. Matthew was rather proud of his Mother Anna.

"If she wants to die fighting," he said, "that's her privilege! I wish I could go over. But I know I can't."

"No," Martha said, "you're doing much more here. And what do you mean about her fighting? My mother couldn't fight—she's too old—even if she had anything to fight about!"

"The Finns would be glad to get her," Matthew argued. "They've formed some society of women who do all sorts of useful work at the Front—the *Lotta Svards*, or some such name."

"Don't let her know about it!"

They had given Martin Anna's letter, feeling there was nothing in it that he shouldn't see. But there was something in it—something they had missed altogether. "I cannot tell you," Anna had said. That was not a phrase with her—not a manner of speech. She meant, literally, that she couldn't tell them. And she was a "loyal" Dane. All Danes were loyal. That was what Martha thought, and what Matthew thought. Martin wasn't so sure. He would have liked to be sure, but he wasn't.

There was another piece of news which they couldn't keep from him. Charlie Rosch died. He died quite suddenly of pneumonia. The Finns crowded Rosch off the front pages, but the inner pages were replete with accounts of his life, highly expurgated. Once Martin had learned of Rosch's death, they had to let him see the papers. Martin read all the accounts and wondered what they had about Martin Lyndendaal down in their morgues where the data on prominent men was stored, ready to be released at a moment's notice. Rosch's exit from life didn't seem real to Martin. There was nothing to make him believe it had happened. What the papers said—well, newsprint was cheap. Why, it was just the other day that Rosch was here, in this room, talking about the good old days. Matthew and Martha went to Rosch's funeral. They said it was a very grand funeral indeed, with all the city dignitaries present, and an emissary from Washington. Martin should have been there. Many people asked for him. But he couldn't exactly be carried in on a stretcher. It had fretted Charlie that he couldn't do more about the war—that he couldn't peddle his steel in person the way he had done in War 1. He couldn't peddle it any more—not ever—not where he was going. There was an old nursery rhyme Martin kept thinking about—Ten little niggers and then there were nine. After a series of sudden disasters, it gets down to—Two little niggers and then there was one.

Benison said there had been a detective story written about it. Benison had the literary man's scorn of detective stories.

"Oh," he said, "don't think I wouldn't write them if I really could! At least, I would have done so. Now—thanks to your appalling and extraordinary generosity—I can write as I please, and what I please, at least for a while. If I can't make good in that time, I deserve a job on a confession magazine."

Martin wasn't quite clear about such a job, but it was evidently a very low point. Even lower, the young man said, than the kind of work from which his benefactor had freed him.

"Do you remember," he questioned Martin, "that you asked me once about my financial arrangements with old J. K.?"

"Yes, not that it was any of my business. You admitted you had received an advance. Doesn't that bind you?"

"Not any more. I sent it back and obtained a full release. Jellicoe Kent—Kent Books, Incorporated—they were mad as hell, but what could they do? Said they were given to suppose that I was still working on the idea or they would have put someone else in my place. And now of course, it's—"

"Too late?"

"Well, perhaps that's what they think."

"I myself told them that there was to be no book!"

"Yes, I know—" Benison changed the subject rather abruptly.

Martin tried to remember a conversation he had had with Benison some time before, in which the writer had mentioned a book he wanted to write, but couldn't, as it would conflict with this work which he had engaged to do—some novel, Martin thought it was. Martin didn't know much about writing, but it was quite clear that you couldn't write a novel and a biography at the same time. It didn't seem to

Martin a very good moment for novel writing, with the world as it was to-day.

"Moments change," said Benison. He explained rather painstakingly how, if he made a name for himself, his real use in the world would be greatly enhanced. He had become quite a member of the family. He would come to see Martin in the late afternoon and stay on, often having dinner with Martha, and with Matthew too, when Matthew was at home. Sarah, Martin heard, invited him to some of her parties, and Sylvia thought him charming.

"I'm coming up in the world," he told Martin. "I'm getting into society—not that I regard that as any extraordinary feat for a single man who's reasonably presentable."

"Do you like society?"

"Some of it. I prefer a quiet evening chatting with Mrs. Lyndendaal."

"Why, you never knew Mrs. Lyndendaal—"

"I'm sorry—I don't mean that one."

"Oh—you mean Martha. What do you chat about?"

"Nothing much. I know little that interests her. All I can do is to sing her a song."

"I didn't know you sang."

"I don't. But I must set down what I think and what I see, and with her I think and see a great deal."

"My youngest grandson once said something the same thing—not about Martha, specifically. Why does it have to be set down?"

"You mistrust books, don't you?"

"Yes, I mistrust books. By the way, I hope you're not becoming seriously interested in Martha—not—"

"Falling in love with her? Oh, don't worry about that! Men of my stripe can always manage love."

"How?"

"We can look at it without shielding our eyes."

There were, of course, two great subjects—love and war.

These were the two texts upon which men could talk always and forever. And war was forbidden in this room where Martin lay. They had moved his bed here, that oddly adjustable bed which could be cranked up or down to any desired position. The position of sitting, as he had done for so long in his velvet-covered chair, had become too great a strain. Martin's strength must be conserved in every way possible. Yes, in every way, so that he might die slowly, and in the style befitting a great man.

Not for Martin Lyndendaal to die in haste—save in as much as all death is sudden—or to be left on a frozen field like the hordes of tenth-rate soldiers that the Russians were still hurling against the Finnish defense. There was much talk of peace—peace being not forbidden. It was a strange peace which was finally signed at Moscow, so Martin thought, from what he could learn of it. The Finns had to meet all Russia's demands and grant her wishes. There had been too many Russian soldiers. Their bodies could be piled three deep, like beeves in a storehouse, but they kept on coming.

There was the Baltic Sea and Sweden, and Finland to the north. South of Denmark, Germany lay. Still south, Hitler met Mussolini at the Brenner Pass. The two men sat in Mussolini's private car and talked for more than two hours. What did they talk about? The Brenner Pass was the great gateway, the path of Teutonic invaders long before there was a railroad there. Up from Innsbruck, it went, and then down, past Bressanone and Bozen, following the valley to Verona. Martin could not be concerned about Verona. He was a good deal weaker than he had been—too weak, really, to be concerned about anything. Was that why the papers were brought to him now, and the radio set going? Was it to shock him out of the apathy into which he was falling? They thought he was dying. He wasn't dying. He was getting ready to die, perhaps—waiting—wondering when the end would come and what it would be like.

It wasn't winter any more, but spring. The leaves of the Park trees were small but green. The spring was late this year. Better late than never, Eric said. Adolphus knew it was spring. Martin could hear him barking outside, and then Eric's voice, telling him to be still. The weather was unusually cold, and it rained a great deal. The weather was such a good safe thing to think about. Martin asked that a little fire be kept going in his grate. He liked to see the flickering brightness of the flames. And it didn't make the room too warm because they could turn off the steam.

The English were trying to blockade Germany, and cut off all her sources of supply. Stopping the leaks, it could be called. They made a series of trade pacts with all the neutral countries. Trade pacts were weapons of peace, not of war. The English had a good navy. All this talk of peace, when there could be no peace, except here in this room. And even here there was the sound of struggle, a great heart laboring against odds. Struggle meant tumult—tumult here and there and everywhere. For a long time Martin had known about it, and that the world was changing very fast. But it was only now, within these past days, that he could, within himself, feel the speed of the change. It made it hard to breathe.

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There was Rembrandt looking at him. The eyes saw so much. The eyes lived in the canvas. The whole portrait lived, and would go on living, unless it were destroyed. What a curious hat the man wore, and a garment that was like a woman's dress with its folds and its sash. The hands were heavy. They possessed a strength and a power which must have come—in their case—from the constant performance of delicate tasks. Setting it down—what you think

and what you see—with a brush or with a pen. That was important. The power of those hands was a delicate power, and not misused. Setting down the kingdom and the power and the glory.

Martin wanted to be left alone with just this one symbol of eternity. But his wishes were not asked. There were always people about. There was Eric and the nurse, and more nurses. The room rattled with them—or would have rattled, if they hadn't been encased in a stiff, angelic and unnatural silence. And there were these ubiquitous doctors who knew so much, and were now in some way having their knowledge justified. And there was Matthew. Matthew wasn't a child any more. He wasn't even a boy. Martin remembered him best as a dirty infant playing by a rubbish heap, and not as this tall broad-shouldered young man, whom he had trouble recognizing as Matthew. Besides, what was Matthew doing away from the plant?

He came over to the side of Martin's bed and looked down at him. The face was heavily cut, like one of those great faces they were carving on the sides of mountains. It had that same grimness which might come from stone. But when he spoke the grimness changed. There was a flash of white teeth as he smiled.

"You'll be all right, Grandfather—you'll be all right." He turned quickly and went out. Martin never knew what Matthew thought.

That left Martin alone as he wanted to be alone. For a long time the room seemed to be quite empty, save for some small detail of motion which came within his vision, like a sleeve of blue serge covering a man's arm, or a white starched cuff from which a woman's hand emerged, and faces seen dimly as dusk fell. There was no one in the room at all—just these pieces of human occupancy and then nothing. And then he became aware that there were two women standing together over by the windows. They seemed to be talking.

though he couldn't hear what they said. Who were these women? Well, he'd managed to know who Matthew was. He'd know these if you gave him a little time. If he could hear their voices he'd know. Martin had a good memory for voices.

They were both very beautiful women, though not exactly young. About forty, perhaps. Perhaps less. Both slim and tall. The younger of the two was unusually tall, and wore a roughly woven woolen suit and a white shirt open at the throat. What fine hands she had! And what a magnificent ring caught the light from a little lamp on the table. The ring blazed from her finger like a fiery cross. The older woman was more elaborately dressed, and her hair was waved and smooth. Was it a little gray? She was smooth all over, as though her gown, her hair, even her skin, had been lacquered by the same brush. You could sense what a charming person she was—how gracious and how kind and how sure of herself. No disturbance of the soul would ever show on that beautiful surface. Suddenly Martin heard her speak. Little more than a whisper, the voice was, but it came clear to him.

"It sounds like a world tour," she was saying. "First north—then south. Rather a bad time to pick for one, it seems to me. The Germans will never let you into Denmark. Wasn't it fortunate that he'll never know?"

The other woman, the taller of the two, spoke: "Yes, even last week would have been too soon. I'll get in—you'll see."

"If you do, you'll never get out. After all, that was what your mother wanted—to stay on her farm. And I don't suppose they're bombing Denmark. Why should they? You don't destroy your own. They won't hurt your mother. How old is she?"

"Seventy-nine—"

"Hardly a dangerous enemy—even if she wished to be."

"I'm not so sure of that—"

"Have it your own way, but you'll never get a passport.

You better concentrate on the south. You can probably make it there. Though why you should want to . . . You'll fly, I suppose?"

"It's the only decent way to travel in South America."

Who was it who hated flying? The gray-haired woman mentioned a name. That was who it was—Julian. Julian was a difficult child, always. Was this tall woman flying south to get him? She'd have her hands full. Now they were full only of the curtain cord. She drew aside the heavy curtains and looked out. Martin could see the lights gleaming in the street. There were stars in the sky, very bright. It must be late—midnight, perhaps. There was something about the middle of the night that you couldn't mistake for any other time.

The smaller woman turned and looked out also. It was very graceful, the way she moved in her long clinging dress. Her head was set beautifully on her shoulders, like a flower. The flower stalk was her throat, which was slender and smooth. Her hair was in a little swirl of waves at the back of her head. Who was she? Martin had thought he would know who she was when he heard her voice. He was disappointed about that. He should have known. She would be a countess at the very least. She reminded him of some woman he remembered, but he didn't remember very well, some woman who used to live in this house here. She reminded him of two women. The second one lived here for a time, left and came back with a child. Or was the child born after she came back? And then left again. The first one never had left, except to die.

"The night is fine," she said.

The tall figure turned from the scene she had exposed, the night sky and the stars and the lights in the street. Martin noticed that there was a crescent moon. He sensed that she hadn't seen it. Her eyes were on something else. He didn't know who she was either, and she wasn't a person whom you

would forget about. She leaned back against the window sill, each hand supporting her and clenched a little, and the ring on her finger shining bright. The ring was of a nature to be connected with occasions of ceremony, but she wore it simply, casually, as if it were something that she happened to have and to like. She was younger than Martin had first thought her. Her hair wasn't gray—not at all gray. It caught the light the same way the ring did, and—like the ring—was simply worn. Martin had seen her before, he was sure—but not as he was seeing her now.

"Do you admire the view?" she asked. She said something more, but he couldn't hear what it was as there was too much noise in the room. It was a steady rise and fall, a tearing sound, with an occasional shrill note which was almost like a whistle. What were they thinking of, to intrude all that on this place so ordered and so removed from trouble? It was a wonder that Martin had been able to distinguish any of the talk, except that sometimes you heard things, not with your ears, but with some inner sense of what was being said. That noise was horrible. It was deafening. It was an engine that must be stopped.

Martha came towards Martin very quickly, in as straight a motion as a ship might use, cutting through the sea. No step taken, one in front of the other, and no sound of steps. No sound of anything, suddenly. "Do you admire the view?"

What did Martha mean by that? The view for Martin had changed. The bright sky had become a cold dawn. The window from which the dawn was seen was small. There was a stove against one wall with a kettle bubbling. And a new sound setting in on the moment there had been of complete stillness, a rumbling like heavy traffic on a road, and overhead a steady roaring sound—engines or wings. There was no battle in progress, no explosion of bombs, no gunfire. It was like troops on the march, unopposed. The planes in the sky were flying low, making a steady speed to some fixed

landing point. The farmyard was no battle ground, though there were soldiers there—just a handful. They were walking towards the house, as easily as men who would be sure of a welcome. It was a good house. Martin could see that, as he could see everything else—all at once. It was a good clean solidly built house. In the open doorway an old woman was standing, and two young men, one on either side of her—the young men were a bit out in front, standing outside on the doorstep. One of them, Martin could see, didn't want to be there, or to be holding the gun he was holding. But he was afraid of the old woman, and didn't dare to set his gun down and throw up his hands. He was more afraid of her than he was of the soldiers. What did he think she would do? Shoot him in the back? No, Anna wouldn't do that. She would reserve her fire. She shot right into the soldiers who were making so free of her path. One of the soldiers, who must have been an officer, raised his pistol and shot her cleanly square between the eyes. She fell directly at Martin's feet.

Someone was speaking. For a moment Martin thought it was Martha. It wasn't Martha. Martha never spoke in Danish any more. No, not Martha, but Anna—"You and I together, Martin—"

THE END

